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This is a work of fiction.
All resemblance to actual persons or events is purely coincidental.

...was about to face his death.

The lord of Sunpu Castle, Tokugawa Tadanaga...

Tenth year of the Kan'ei era (1633), December 6th

...WAS BECAUSE HE WAS FOUND GUILTY OF IMMORAL CONDUCT UNWORTHY OF A GREAT LORD.

THE REASON WHY THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF SHOGUN[1] TOKUGAWA IEMITSU HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO COMMIT SEPPUKU[2]...

1: The hereditary commander of the Japanese army who, until 1867, exercised absolute rule under the nominal leadership of the emperor.

*2: See **Historical Notes** (HN) at the end of the chapter.*

MANY LEGENDS HAD GROWN FROM TADANAGA'S ATROCITIES.

HOWEVER, THOSE WERE BUT POPULAR ACCOUNTS.

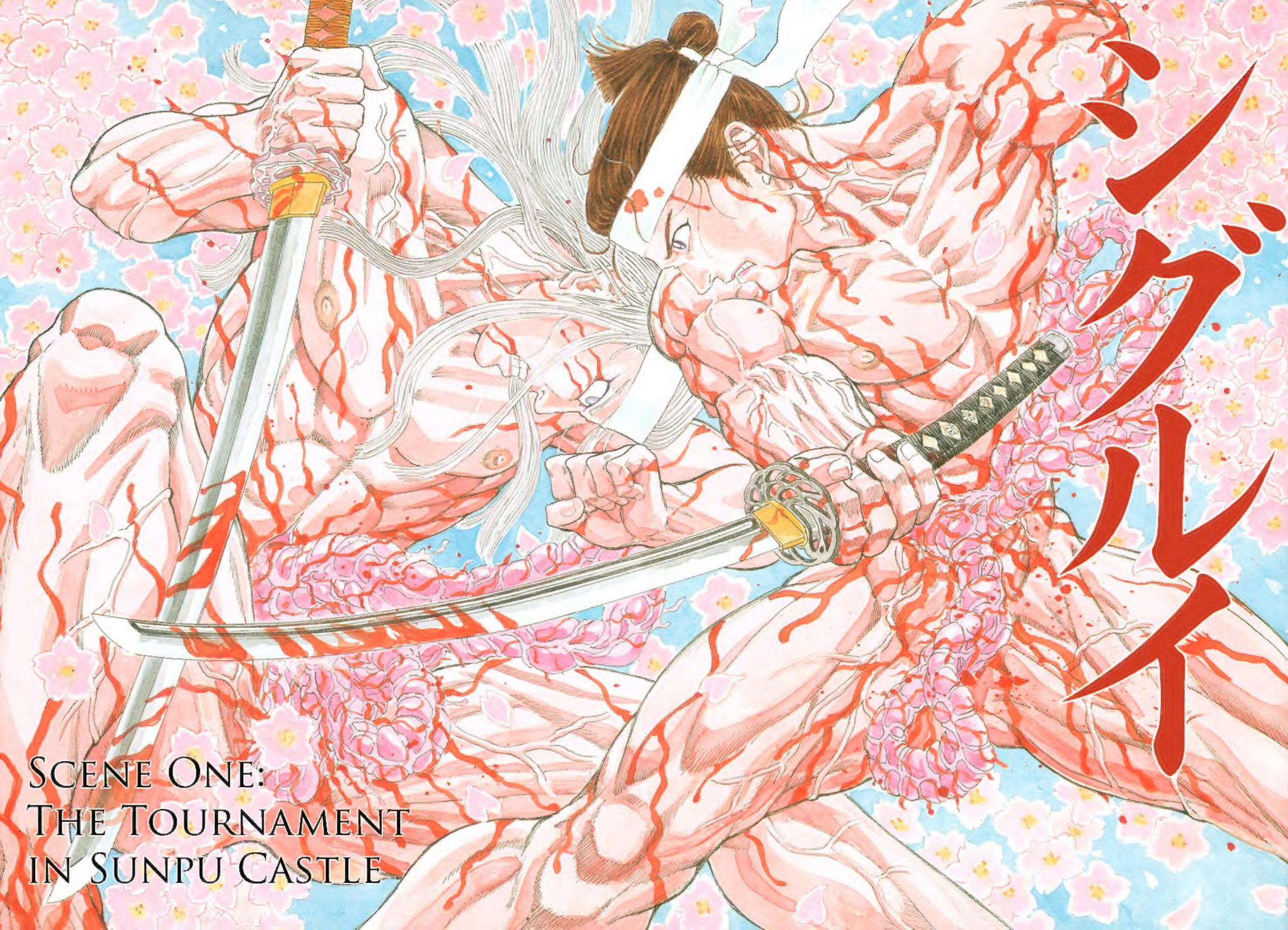
THEY SAID THAT HE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SHOT AND KILLED 1240 MONKEYS ON A SACRED MOUNTAIN WHERE HUNTING AND FISHING WERE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN...

...AND THAT HE DISEMBOWELLED A PREGNANT WOMAN ALIVE.

ALL OF WHICH COULD NOT BE PROVEN.

ONLY A TEXT FOUND IN THE "PRIVATE DIARY OF SURUGA'S CHIEF COUNCILOR" DEPICTING A TOURNAMENT THAT TOOK PLACE INSIDE THE CASTLE OF SURUGA...

...WAS CONSIDERED A RELIABLE RECORD OF TADANAGA'S BARBARITY.



Scene One: The Tournament in Sunpu Castle

Total number of contestants:
Twenty-two, divided in eleven groups.

Eight were killed in defeat.

Six were killed by each other's swords.

Two were executed by firing squad.

Six survived, two of whom were
severely injured.

Excerpt from the manuscript of the
"Private Diary of Suruga's Chief Councilor,"
a document handed down in the family of
Mr. Tejima Take'ichirô.

Sunpu Castle

Sixth year of the Kan'ei era (1629)

...I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU!

MY LORD ...

1: An old province of Japan in the area that is today Kochi Prefecture on Shikoku.

TORII NARITSUGU, THE GOVERNOR OF TOSA[1]

YOU SMELL VILE.

TOKUGAWA TADANAGA, SURUGA'S CHIEF COUNCILOR

TORII-DONO INTENDS TO REMONSTRATE WITH OUR LORD ON THE MATTER IN QUESTION...

...WHILE KEEPING HIDDEN THE FACT THAT HE HAS CUT OPEN HIS STOMACH!

IT CONCERNS A MATTER OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE. YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME!

...FOR WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE THE CONTESTANTS TO EMPLOY THE USE OF REAL SWORDS...

WITH REGARD TO THE TOURNAMENT THAT YOU ARE GOING TO HOLD INSIDE THE CASTLE ON THE 24TH OF SEPTEMBER...

1: See HN.

TO APPRAISE THE SKILL LEVEL OF EACH CONTESTANT, WOODEN SWORDS SHOULD PROVE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT.

I IMPLORE YOU TO CANCEL IT!

BY PERMITTING THE USE OF REAL SWORDS, WE RISK TO LOSE OUR BEST-

HURG!

EEK!

OUR NATION HAS LONG BEEN AT PEACE.

SHOULD THE GARDEN OF SUNPU CASTLE, A PLACE REMEMBERED IN CONNECTION WITH THE GREAT *TOSHO DAIGONGEN*[1], BE DESECRATED BY A BLOOD BATH IN A TIME SUCH AS THIS...

...IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE INTERPRETED AS AN EXPRESSION OF REBELLION AGAINST THE SHOGUNATE[2].

1: The divine title of Tokugawa Ieyasu. It was granted to him posthumously.

2: The government controlled by a shogun.

...SEVERE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR HIGHNESS AND HIS HOUSE!

THIS WOULD CAUSE...

FOR THAT REASON...

...IN PLACE OF THE TOURNA-MENT'S CONTES-TANTS!

GWAA

...I SHALL GIVE YOU A DEMON-STRATION...

AAH.

ALL THAT RESULTS FROM A DUEL WITH REAL SWORDS...

...CAN BE SUMMED UP BY *THIS!*

BUT PERHAPS ...

...THAT YOU ARE EVEN WILLING TO GIVE UP THE 550,000 KOKU THAT REPRESENT SURUGA IN EXCHANGE!

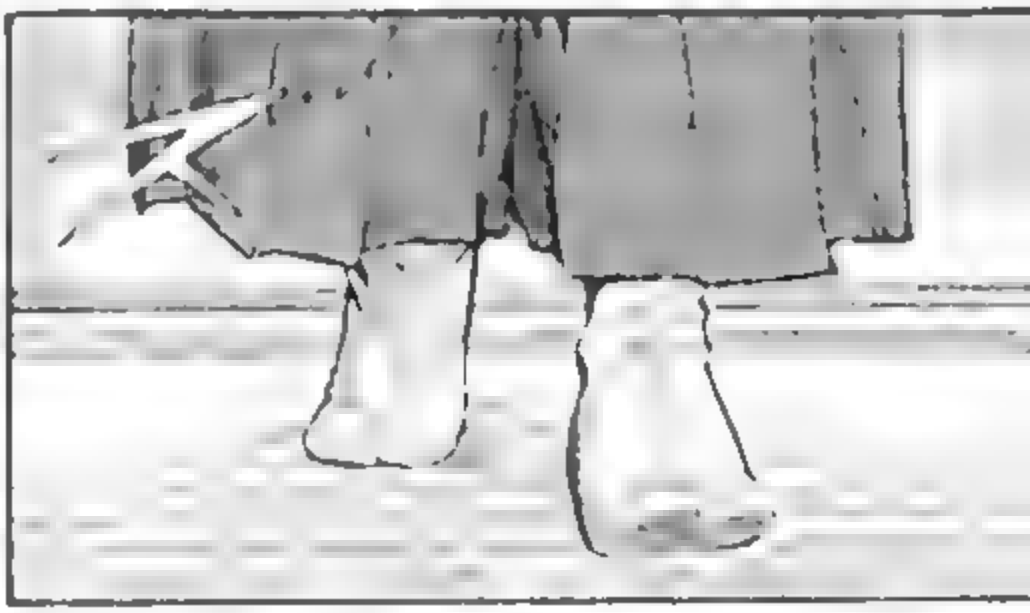
YOUR RUTHLESS DESIRE TO SEE THIS KIND OF THING IS SO STRONG

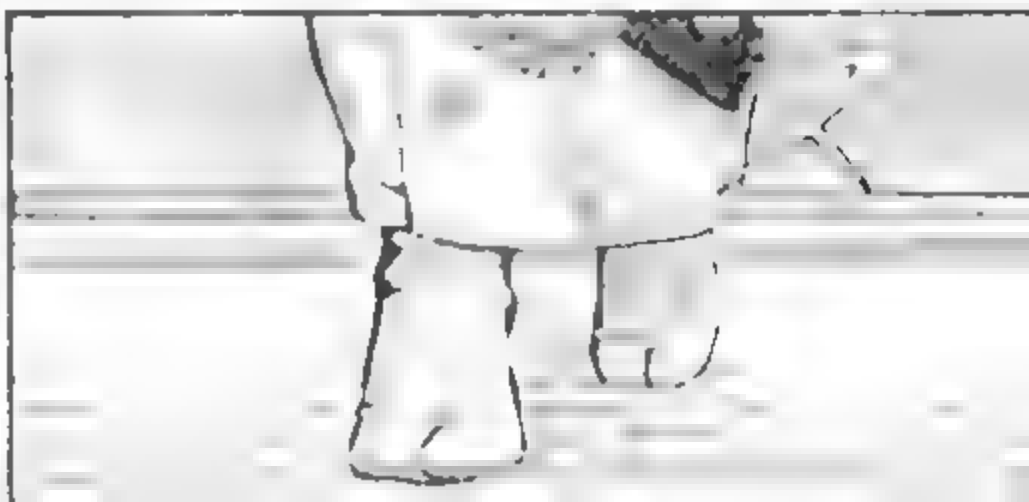
FOOL...

SIXTH YEAR OF THE KAN'EI ERA (1629), JANUARY TWO RETAINERS OF THE SURUGA DOMAIN COMMITTED SEPPUKU.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT NO SWORDSMAN WHO WAS GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOURNAMENT SHOULD PRESENT HIMSELF IN AN UNSIGHTLY MANNER BEFORE THE EYES OF LORD TADANAGA...

...SURUGA'S GRAND MASTER OF MARTIAL ARTS SUBJECTED EACH CONTESTANT TO A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION IN APRIL OF THE SAME YEAR.





I AM IWAMOTO KOGAN'S DAUGHTER

MY NAME IS MIE

I AM FUJIKI GENNOSUKE FROM THE KOGAN SCHOOL.

1 An old region that extended over today Gifu and Aichi Prefectures.

SO YOU ARE FROM THE FAMED KOGAN SCHOOL, DUBBED AS THE NONPAREIL OF NOBI!!

KOH!

HYUGA MASAHISA, *HANBEI*

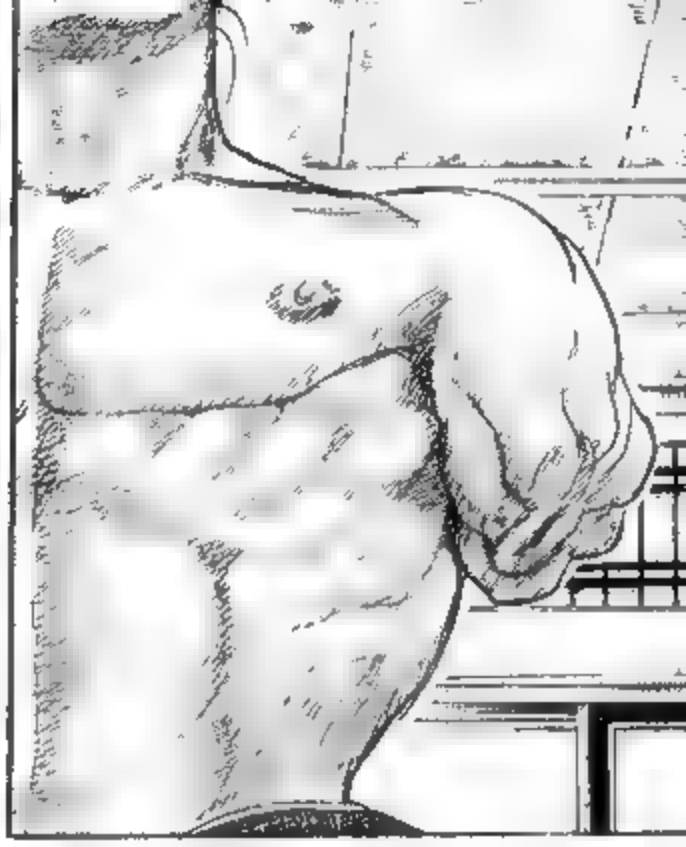
2 A title in the samurai hierarchy.

...YOU WERE RECOMMENDED TO US BY OUR *KARO*[3], THE AUGUST SAEGUSA, GOVERNOR OF IZU.

FUJIKI GENNOSUKE-DONO...

3 The top-ranking samurai officials in service to a feudal lord during the Edo period

BY WAY OF PRECAUTION, I SHALL NEVERTHELESS EXAMINE YOUR BODY.



AND THIS?

YES, ONCE.

IT APPEARS THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE MATCH EXPERIENCE WITH REAL SWORDS.

IT IS A RESULT OF THE SAME FIGHT.

What reason could the karo have for...?

What horrible injury!

Would it be wise to let a man in his condition go before our lord?

Oh

What singular muscula ture...!

The back muscles of Fujiki Gennosuke...

...make you think his only arm could easily perform the job of two.

Sixth year of the Kan'ei era (1629), September 24th

...ALL FELT THE SAME SHARP PAIN IN THEIR CHEST.

THE SAMURAI IN TADANAGA'S SERVICE WHO ATTENDED THE CASTLE THAT DAY...

THEIR SENTIMENT WAS SHARED BY THE GROUP OF COUNTRY SAMURAI[1] WHO CAME FROM THE NEIGHBORING VILLAGES AT TADANAGA'S INVITATION.

1 See HN

AS THEY WERE HEADED TOWARDS THE ARENA, THE FACES OF SURUGA'S CHIEF RETAINERS...

2 An old province in the area that is today the southern part of Fukuoka Prefecture, on Kyushu.

...WERE FROZEN IN A SINGLE EXPRESSION OF MOURNING.

ASAKURA NOBUMASA, THE GOVERNOR OF CHIKUGO[2]

EVERYTHING IS READY, MY LORD.

SAEGUSA TAKAMASA, THE GOVERNOR OF IZU[1]

1 An old province including the Izu Peninsula that is today part of Shizuoka Prefecture and the Izu Islands that are now part of T...

NORMALLY, THE DUELS IN A MARTIAL-ARTS TOURNAMENT HELD BEFORE HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS WERE FOUGHT USING WOODEN SWORDS. FURTHERMORE, NO DIRECT ATTACKS ON THE BODY WERE ALLOWED

AFTER ALL, IT WOULD BE UTTERLY POINTLESS TO SEND THOSE WARRIORS TO THEIR DEATH WHO WERE SKILLED ENOUGH TO BE SELECTED FOR SUCH A TOURNAMENT.

...FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, A TOURNAMENT OF BLOOD AND STEEL WAS ABOUT TO BE HELD.

YET ON THAT DAY, MERELY TO SATISFY A DEVIANT LORD'S DESIRE FOR ESCAPIST ENTERTAINMENT...

...THIS BARBARIC TRAGEDY FROM HAPPENING!

THERE WAS NO ONE WHO COULD NOW PREVENT...

...was not master of his own life.

For a samurai...

...than to give his life for his master.

...there could be no greater honor for him...

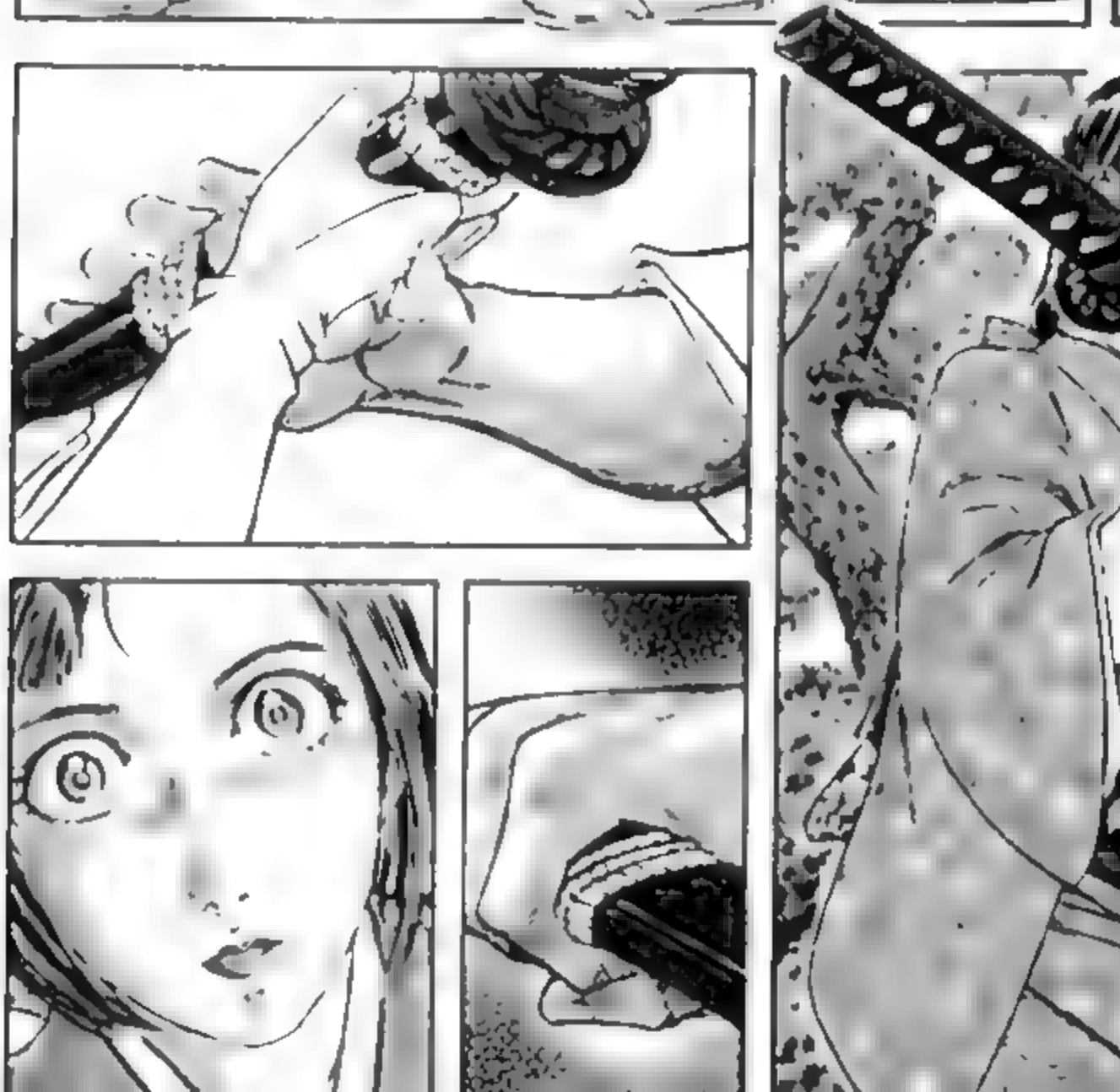
...of a lord...

When a warrior entered into the service...

THE FEUDAL SOCIETY, IN ITS PERFECT FORM...

...WAS COMPRISED OF A SMALL NUMBER OF SADISTS AND A LARGE NUMBER OF MASOCHISTS.

...WAS PUT IN PLACE TO GUARD AGAINST ALL CONTIN-GENCIES.
THE MUSKET SQUAD POSI-TIONED OUTSIDE THE ARENA...


MAY FORTUNE BE WITH YOU!

I SAW YOU EMERGING VICTORIOUS FROM THIS DUEL.

I HAD A VISION!

IS THERE SOMETHING AMISS, MIE-DONO ?

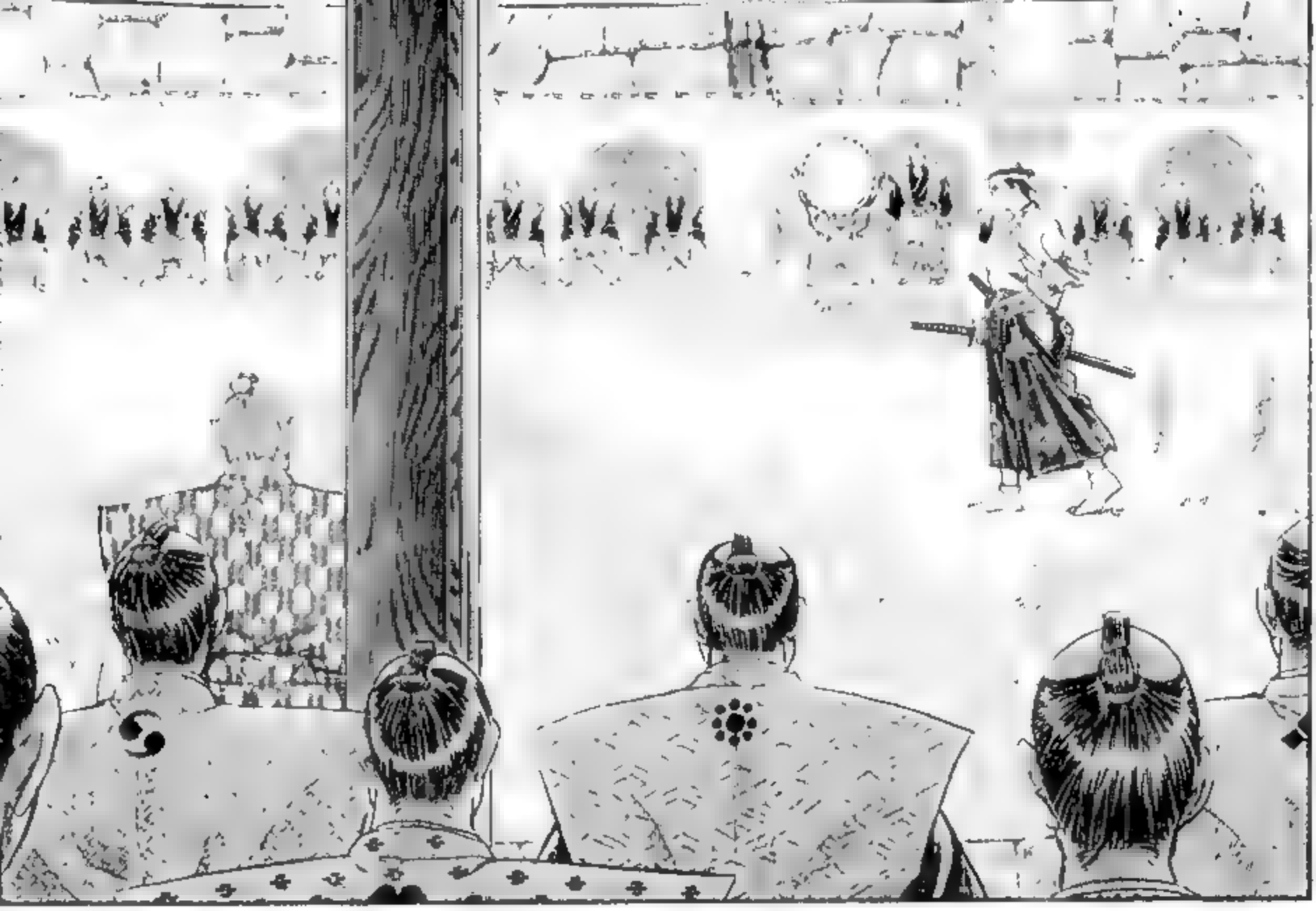
THE TIME HAS COME!

FUJIKI GENNOSUKE-DONO!

The castle's southern courtyard, at the hour of the Snake[1]

1 Between 9 and 11 a.m. See also HN

WEST SIDE:
FUJIKI
GENNOSUKE!



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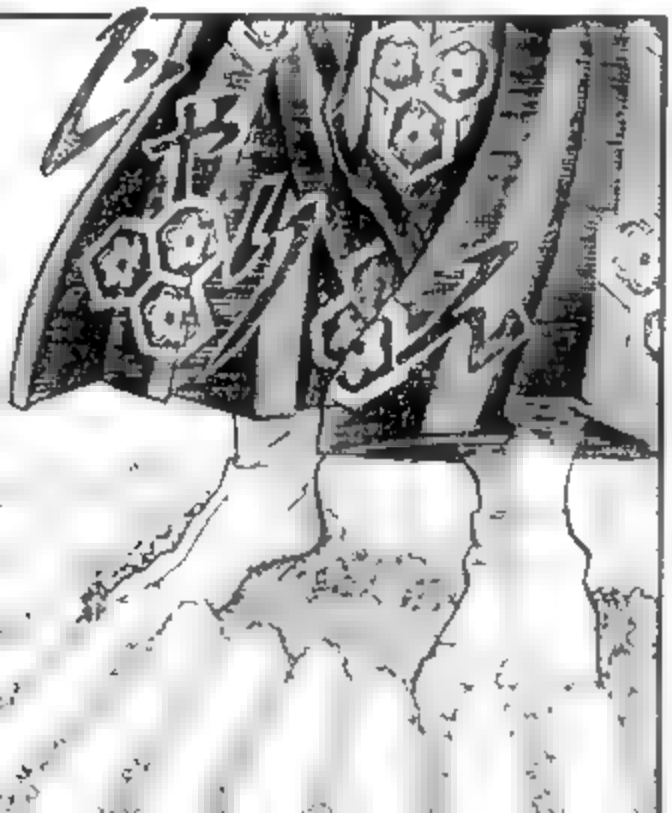

じゃす

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS LEFT ARM ?!
WH...

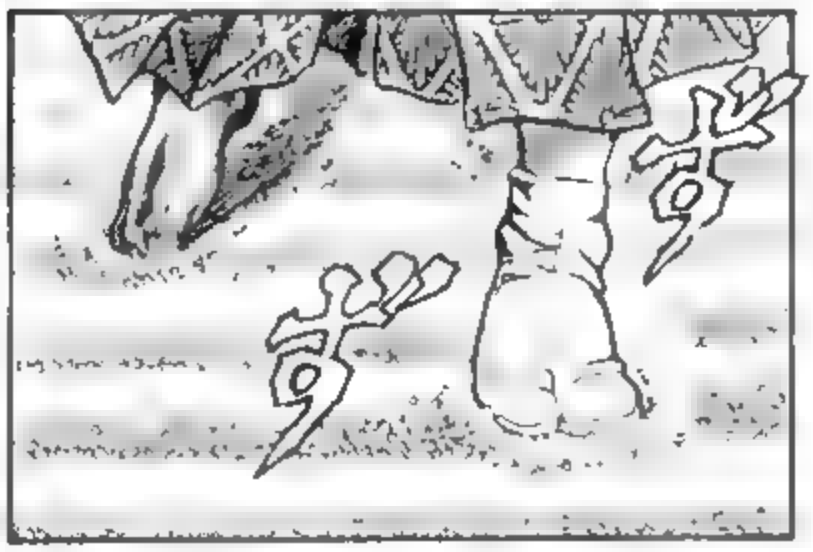
EAST SIDE: IRAKO SEIGEN!

PLEASE BE CAREFUL.

IKU

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, IKU.

IRAKO SEIGEN



H-HE'S NOT JUST LAME, BUT ALSO...

A... A LAME SWORDSMAN!

WHO WOULD
HAVE THOUGHT
THAT SUCH A
DUEL COULD BE
POSSIBLE!

A ONE ARMED
SWORDSMAN
AGAINST A
BLIND ONE..?!

IRAKO SEIGEN!

FUJIKI GENNO-SUKE!

DO NOT HESITATE TO GIVE FULL PLAY TO YOUR SKILLS TO SATISFY OUR LORD!

BOTH OF YOU SHALL NOT HOLD BACK!

THAT IS INDEED SO.
YOU WERE THE PERSON WHO ARRANGED THIS MATCH, WERE YOU NOT, SAEGUSA-DONO?

AND A BLIND SWORDSMAN CAN'T EVEN MAKE A CUT IN HIS OPPONENT'S SKIN!
A ONE-ARMED SWORDSMAN DOES NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO SLICE THROUGH BONE!
THIS ENTIRE FIGHT IS A FARCE

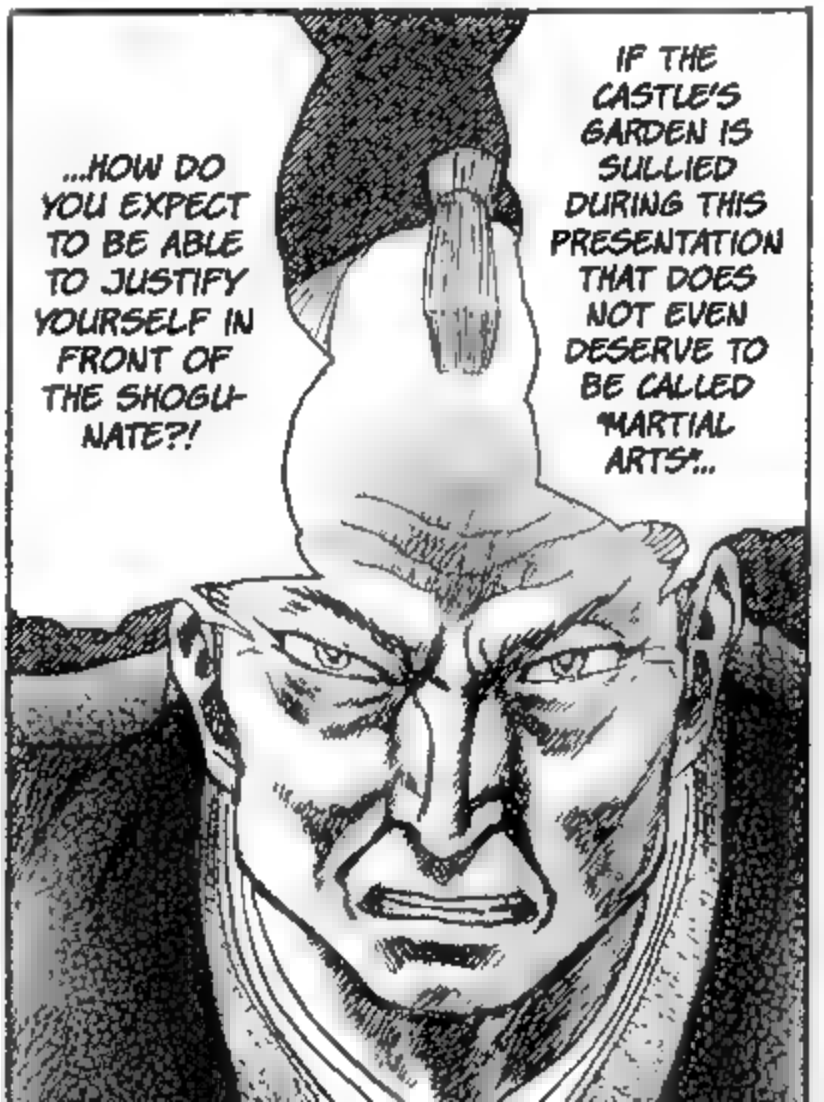
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES?

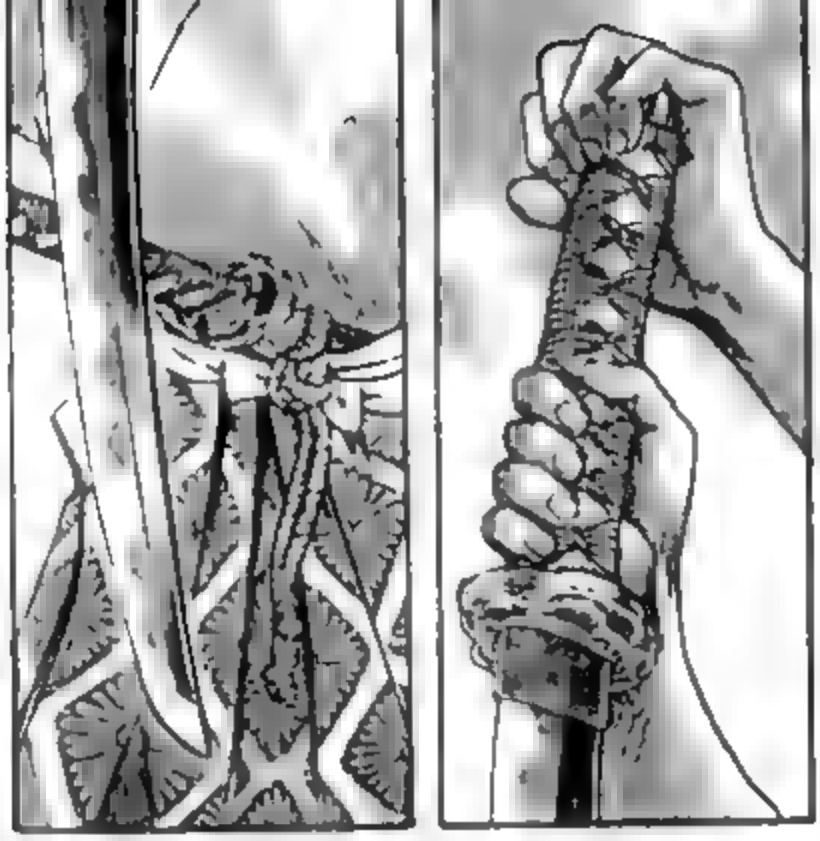
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

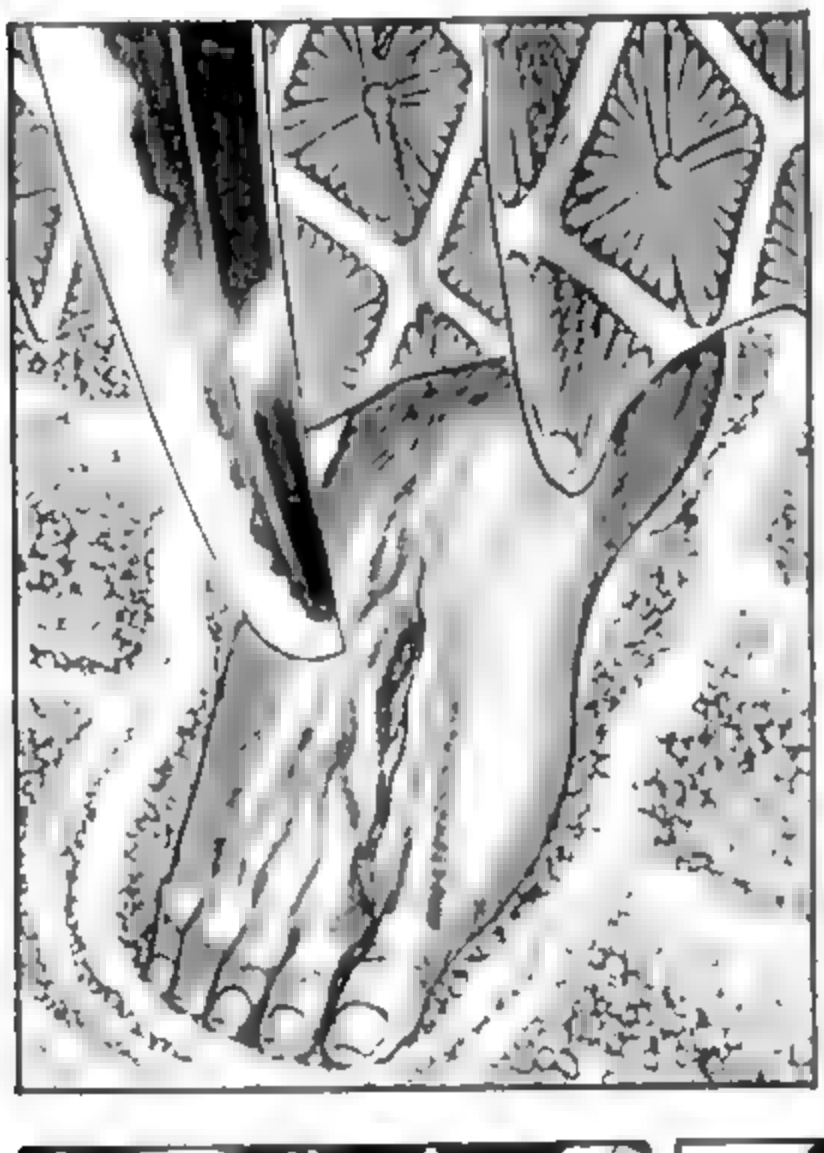
...

WATCH CLOSELY, ASAKURA-DONO!

YOU ARE MISTAKEN!


...HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO JUSTIFY YOURSELF IN FRONT OF THE SHOGUNATE?!
IF THE CASTLE'S GARDEN IS SULLIED DURING THIS PRESENTATION THAT DOES NOT EVEN DESERVE TO BE CALLED "MARTIAL ARTS"...





.....

THE CRUEL BLOWS DEALT TO THEM BY FATE WEREN'T ENOUGH TO CRUSH THEM.
BOTH OF THOSE SWORDSMEN POSSESS AN INDOMITABLE WILL THAT CANNOT BE STOPPED!
QUITE THE CONTRARY. IN THE END THEY ONLY STIR THE MEN'S FIGHTING SPIRIT MORE!

That bizarre sword stance was something no one from any school had ever seen or heard of.

...that of mumyo sakana-gare!

That is indeed Irako-sama's invincible stance...

Oh!

1 Lit. "backflow of (spiritual) darkness."

FUJIKI-SAMA...

That detestable...

...detestable Irako!

I PRAY YOU CUT HIM IN HALF!

XII

YOU MONSTER!

Historical Notes
Scene One

Seppuku as Capital Punishment
Page 03

During Japan's early feudal period, suicide by self-disemboweiment gradually became more ritualized, and by the time of the Edo period it had become one of the five grades of punishment for wrongdoers among the samurai and noble class. In case of Tadanaga, who was both uncooperative and too dangerous to be trusted with a sword, the actual execution had to be carried out by decapitation and the short sword normally laid out in front of the sentenced person was replaced with a fan. This is called *ôgîbara*, from the words *ôgi* (fan) and *hara* (stomach).

Kanshi
Page 10

Torii has committed a special form of seppuku called *kanshi* (lit.,"death of understanding"), in which a retainer would kill himself in protest of a lord's decision. The retainer would make a deep cut into his stomach, then quickly bandage the wound. After this, the person would then appear before his lord, give a speech in which he announced the protest of the lord's action, then reveal his mortal wound.

Koku
Page 14

A measure of volume or capacity used generally for rice. In the Edo period a *koku* (石) of grain equaled about five bushels, theoretically enough rice to feed one person for a year. Land productivity, tax assessments, the stipends of samurai, and the wealth of daimyo were all measured in *koku*.

Country Samurai
Page 25

Gôshi in Japanese. Low-ranking samurai who lived in the countryside and who supported themselves from holdings they oversaw personally.

Times of Day
Page 34

Before the Meiji period (1868–1912), the Japanese described times of day by dividing it into twelve *koku* (刻), each of which is equal to two hours and is given the name of one of the animals from the zodiac. The hour of the Snake (*mi no koku*), for example, corresponds to 9–11 a.m. on a modern clock.

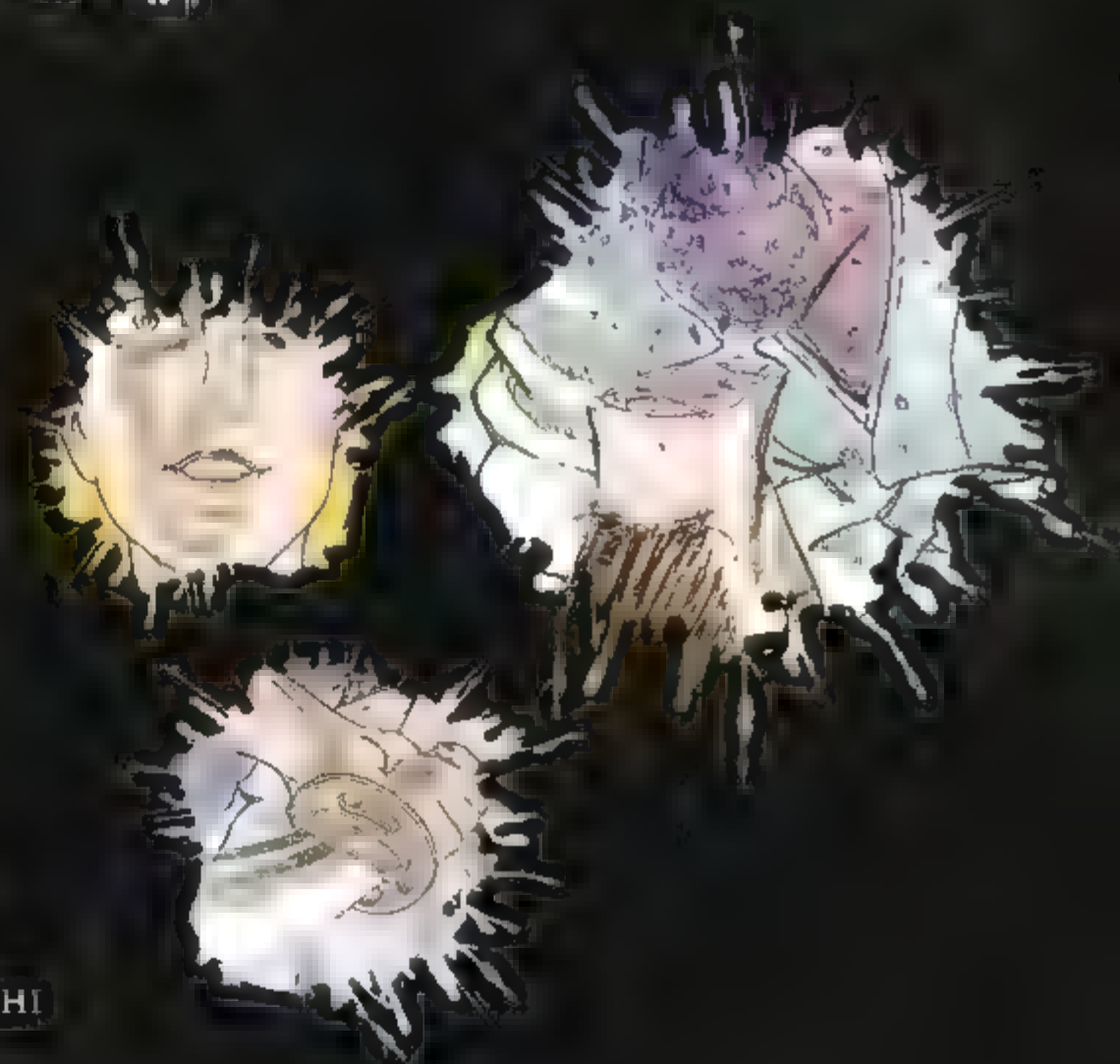
Champion
RED Comics
RED

Translation & Lettering
Nomad Soul
English Adaptation
The Postindustrialist
Proofreading
Jiji & Danbeck

Scanlation & Quality Check

死刑

原作 南條範夫
漫画 山口貴由



1

shigurui

Story: Norio Nanjo
Art: Takayuki Yamaguchi

Introductory Notes

The Title

The word *shigurui* ("death frenzy") derives from a quote by the famous Japanese general Nabeshima Naoshige (1537–1619) as recorded in the *Hagakure*[1]: "The Way of the Samurai is in desperateness *[shi(ni)gurui]*. Ten men or more cannot kill such a man." The word used by Nabeshima combines the Japanese character for "death" with that for "going crazy." It signifies the idea of a samurai who would not hesitate to rush to his death like a madman in the service of his master.

Original Work

Shigurui's story thus far bases loosely on the first chapter of Norio Nanjô's period novel *Suruga-jô Gozenjiai* ("The Tournament in Suruga's Castle"), which is actually a collection of short stories revolving around a sword tournament (consisting of eleven matches) that takes place inside the castle of Suruga. The first chapter, titled *Mumyô Sakanagare*, was also adapted as a movie under the title *Taiketsu* ("Showdown") in 1963.

The Edo Period (1603-1867)

Also called the Tokugawa period. One of the major epochs of Japanese history, the Edo period is distinguished by the fact that for more than two centuries Japan enjoyed freedom from warfare at home and abroad. Despite authoritarian administration and a policy of national seclusion, Japan experienced significant political, social, economic, and cultural change during this period.

The Kan'ei Era (1624-1643)

A Japanese era after *Genna* (1615–1623) and before *Shôhô* (1644–1648).

Suruga and Sunpu Castle

Suruga was an old Japanese province whose territory roughly corresponded to the eastern half of present-day Shizuoka Prefecture. Its local government had its seat in Sunpu Castle (now part of the city of Shizuoka), which ranked with Osaka Castle as one of the shogunate's most important fortifications outside of Edo (now Tokyo). Sunpu Castle is commonly remembered in connection with Tokugawa Ieyasu (the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate), who, after his reign as shogun, retired and died there (1616).

Tokugawa Tadanaga (1606-1633)

A real-life personality. He was a grandson of Ieyasu (the first Tokugawa shogun), son of Hidetada (the second) and younger brother of Iemitsu (the third). Often referred to as the Chief Councilor of Suruga (*Suruga Dainagon*).
He was appointed daimyo (a feudal lord) of Suruga in 1624. Two years later, he killed a retainer and committed other acts of violence, which resulted in his being stripped of office. He committed seppuku under arrest in 1633.

Notes about Names

Except for the names of the author and artist, all Japanese names are given in the customary order with family name first. Moreover, it was decided to retain a large part of the Japanese honorifics that appear in the manga, the two most common ones being:

sama: denotes someone in a higher social position than the speaker, or whom the speaker holds in great esteem.
dono: the polite form of address for equals in ancient Japan.

[1] ("In the Shadow of Leaves"). Translated as *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai* (1979) by William Scott Wilson. A practical and spiritual guide for the samurai consisting of short anecdotes and reflections. Completed in 1716, it's considered one of the classics on bushido.

原作 南條範夫
『駿河城御前試合』より
漫画 山口貴由

Champion
RED Comics
RED

shigeru

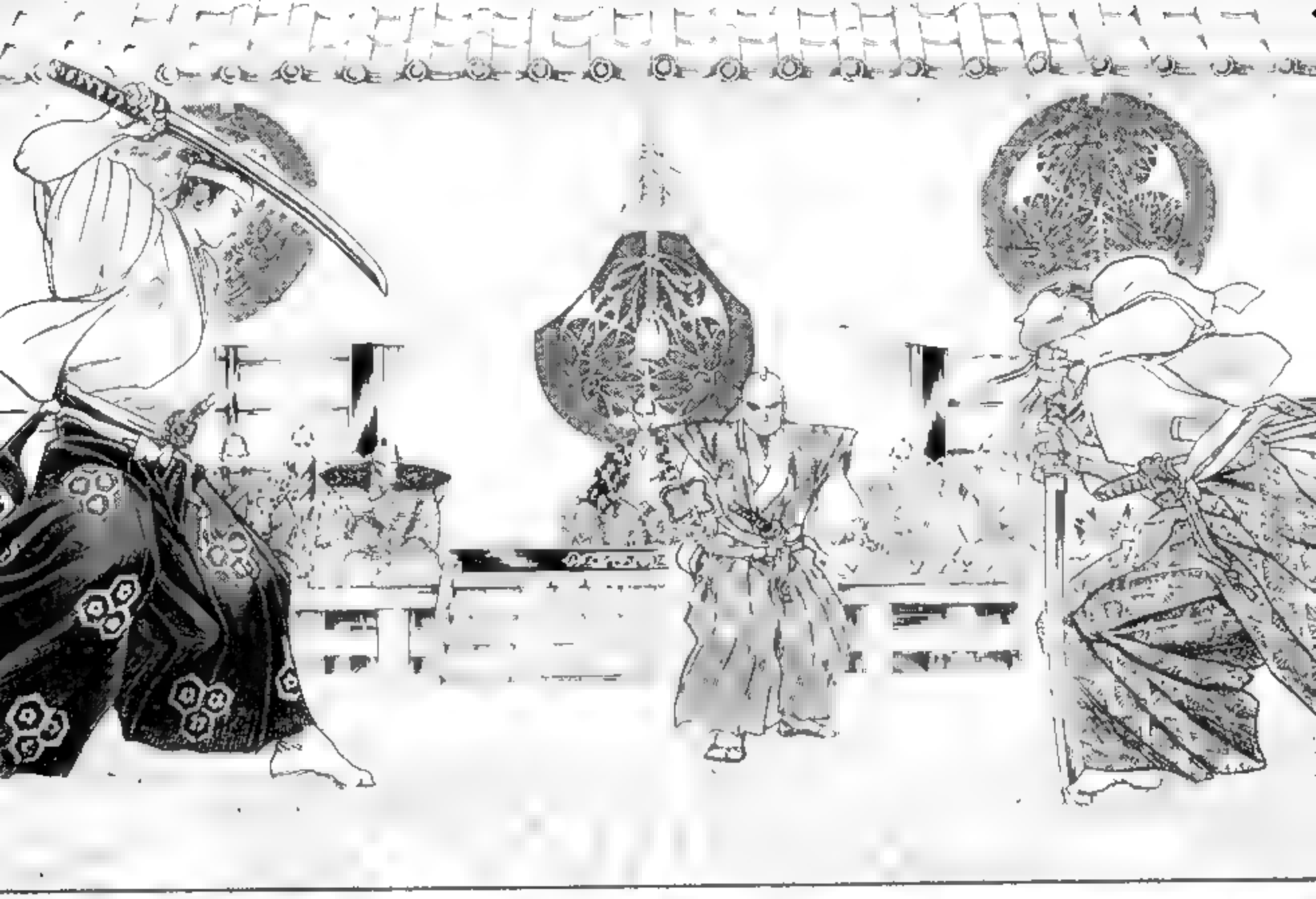
CAN THE BLADE OF THE ONE-ARMED SWORDSMAN

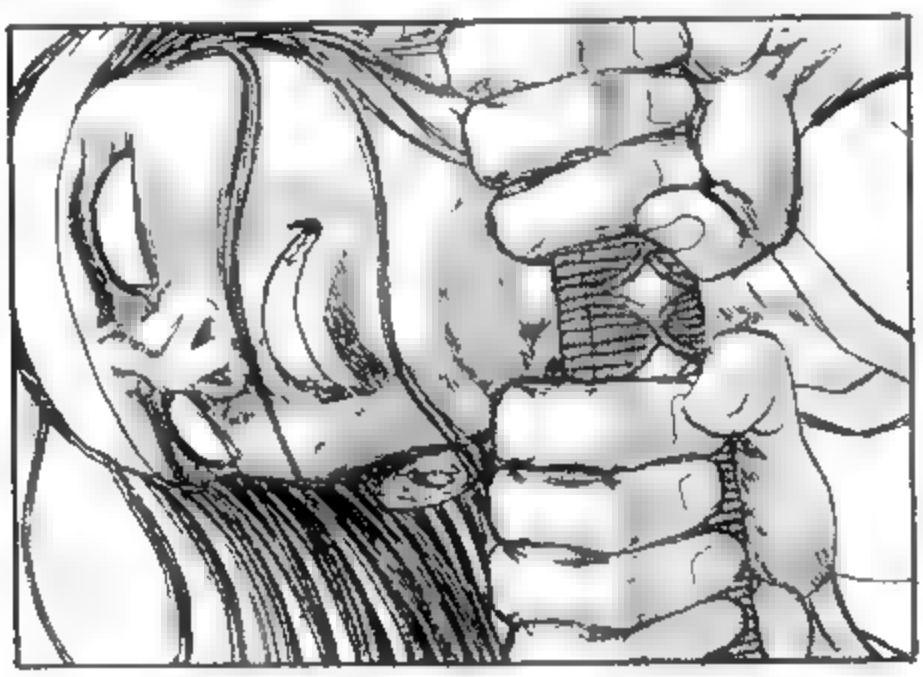
SLICE THROUGH BONE?

CAN THE BLADE OF THE BLIND SWORDSMAN

TOUCH HIS OPPONENT?

IT DEFINITELY CAN!
IT CAN!





THE STANCE OF EACH MAN IS COMPLETELY IMPEN-ETRABLE...
THESE ARE NOT ORDINARY SWORD TECH-NIQUES!

BEHOLD!

BEHOLD, THIS BACK. WHOSE MUSCLES ARE DEFORMED FROM TRAINING!

BEHOLD!

BEHOLD THE TOES OF THIS CRIPPLED FOOT THAT GRIP THE SWORD'S BLADE LIKE A VISE!

ALTHOUGH CUSTOMARILY OFF-LIMITS TO FEMALES, THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THIS PLACE WHO HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHAT SHEER HORROR IS ABOUT TO BE UNLEASHED--

...ARE THE TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN WHOSE EYES ARE FIXED ON THE MATCH!

Seven years ago

Eighth year of the Genna era[1] (1622), Tooto'umi Province[2]

1 1615-1624.
2 Suruga's neighboring province. It was located in the area of Japan that is today western Shizuoka Prefecture.

AT THE DOJO OF SWORD MASTER IWAMOTO KOGAN, WIDELY ACCLAIMED AS THE NON-PAREIL OF NOBI...

DOJO OF MASTER WAMOTO OF THE KOGAN SCHOOL

虎眼流指南岩本道場

...THERE WERE THREE PUPILS WHOM ONE FEARFULLY CALLED "THE TIGER AND THE TWO DRAGONS."

虎眼

YAA!

ウォー

UUP ...!

...n sendo tsubazeri(an) signifies a position in which the opponents' [illegible] their swords and try to push each other out. One of them gets in the position to make a strike

I GI—

ASSISTANT MASTER FUJIKI'S *TSUBAZERI*...

THAT'S TRULY HARSH!

HE DOESN'T EVEN GIVE HIS OPPONENT THE CHANCE TO SURRENDER...

.....

GA AH!

THAT'S ENOUGH!

FUJIKI...

MASTER USHIMATA

...GO A BIT EASIER ON THEM?

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD JUST POSSIBLY WE...

USHIMATA GONZAEMON

THOSE WHO DO NOT SUFFER, DO NOT LEARN!

FUJIKI GENNOSUKE

EXCUSE ME, SIRS!

THERE IS A MAN FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL AT THE ENTRANCE—

IRAKO SEIGEN IS MY NAME.

ASSAILED THE PUPILS' NOSTRILS.

A BEGUILING FRAGRANCE THAT FELT COMPLETELY OUT OF PLACE IN A DOJO...

TO WHAT DO WE OWE THIS VISIT?

I WAS HOPING TO CHALLENGE MASTER IWAMOTO KOGAN TO A DUEL.

I UNDER-STAND.

WHAT ...?!

A DOJO-YABURI!!

*1 Someone who challenges a rival martial arts school in hope to "crush" (jap. yaburu) it by beating its master and demolishing the signboard.

SO BE IT.

HOWEVER, THE RULES OF OUR DOJO REQUIRE...

...THAT YOU FACE TWO OF HIS PUPILS FIRST.

FATHER!

SIR, I BEG YOU! PLEASE DON'T...!

AAH...

A MAN FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL IS IN OUR DOJO!

FATHER!

MIE

DIS-
GUST-
ING!

...one must never bear his opponent malice.
As such, no matter what its outcome...

The contest is an attempt to refine one's skills.
Rules for the Contest Between Representatives of Two Different Schools:

WE MAY WITNESS HIS SPECIAL TECHNIQUE ONCE MORE
NOTHING CAN STOP ASSISTANT MASTER FUJIKI NOW!

RENOWNED IN THE ENTIRE NOSH REGION...
THOUSAND PUPILS IN ITS HEYDAY NEEDLESS TO SAY, ITS FAME AND

Under no circumstances are they to be killed.

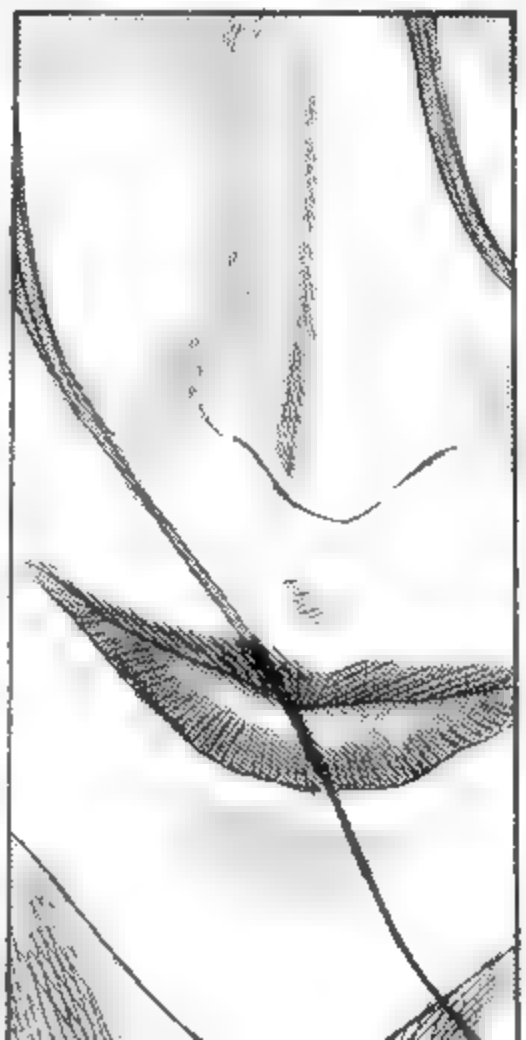
YOU MUST TREAT THE PUPILS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS WITH RESPECT!!

Their appearance is supposed to show the world the might of the Kogen school...

same time.

Instead, you ought t send them

...WON'T BE ANY USE TO YOU IN A DUEL!
YOUR RED LIPS...



USE-LESS!

Even the point of Fujiki's sword seems to be glowing...

BUT, THE TSUBA-ZERIAI...

...IS ASSISTANT MASTER FUJIKI'S SPECIALTY!

WHAT A NERVE!

HE THRUST HIMSELF AT HIM!

I...

Now is the right moment for the *Tsubazeri!*

I will crush you!

JUST THEN...

He missed his chance.

...IRAKO SEIGEN'S WET FINGERS...

...TWINED THEMSELVES AROUND FUJIKI GENNOSUKE'S FIST.

OH...

Scene Three: The Tiger and the Two Dragons

OVERWHELMED BY A VIOLENT PAIN THAT FELT AS IF SOMEONE HAD INJECTED MOLTEN LEAD INTO HIS ENTIRE BODY_

_FUJIKI GEN-NOSUKE WAS COMPLETELY PARALYZED.

YET, IRAKO SEIGEN'S FINGERS_

_WERE PRESSING ON ONLY TWO SPOTS OF HIS RIGHT PALM.

...THERE WAS A SWORDSMAN NAMED IKAKO WHO WAS

NO ONE COULD TELL WITH ABSOLUTE

2: Muscle and organ attack ing technique

1 Edo is the ancient name of Tokyo. The Ushigome district still exists today as part of Shinjuku's eastern area

The *yubigarami*!

"caught fingers."

CIATING PAIN AND PARALYSIS.

THIS MATCH IS OVER!

ACK...

SIR!

S-

GRR-

IT HAS ONLY BEGUN!

NO...

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...

I SAID THIS MATCH IS OVER!

It has only...

IT HAS ONLY BEGUN...

FUJIKI...

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

Gennosuke felt absolutely confident in the smile of this man who was both his senior and fellow pupil.

DON'T CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH ME!

WE HAVE TO SEE TO YOUR HAND!

W-

SIR!

MASTER!

WAS NAMED "THE CHORD-EATER"

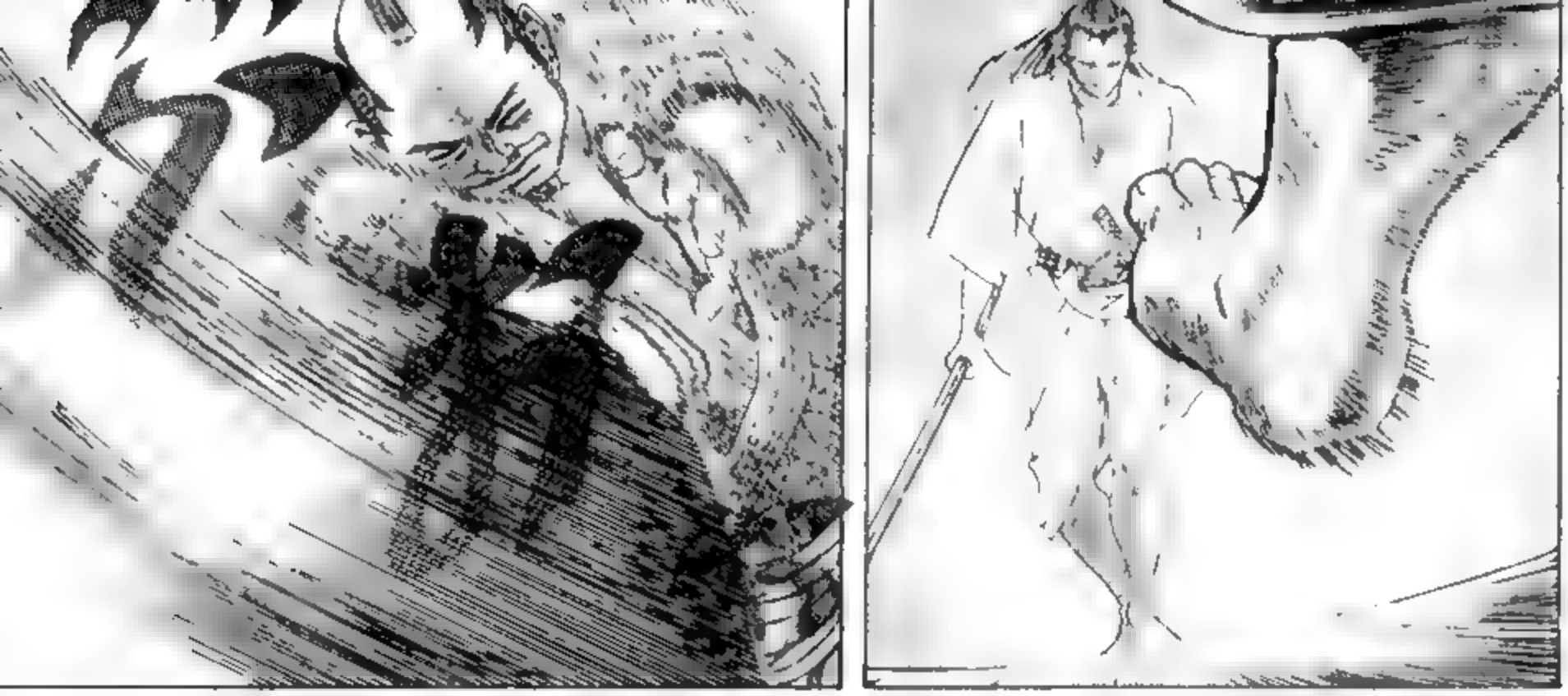
AFTER THE MAGICAL ANIMAL WHOSE TAIL COULD REACH THE LENGTH OF THREE METERS

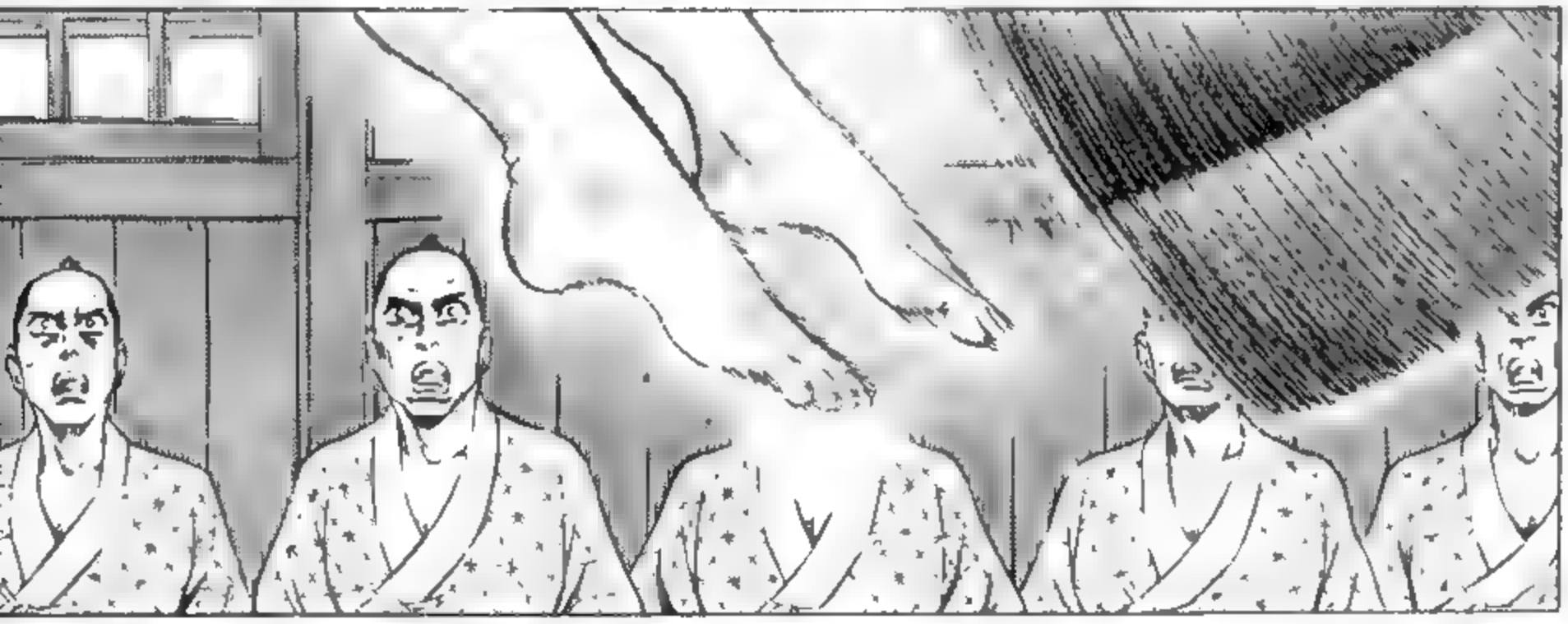
FOR SOMEONE WHO LACKED THE BODY STRENGTH AND HEIGHT_

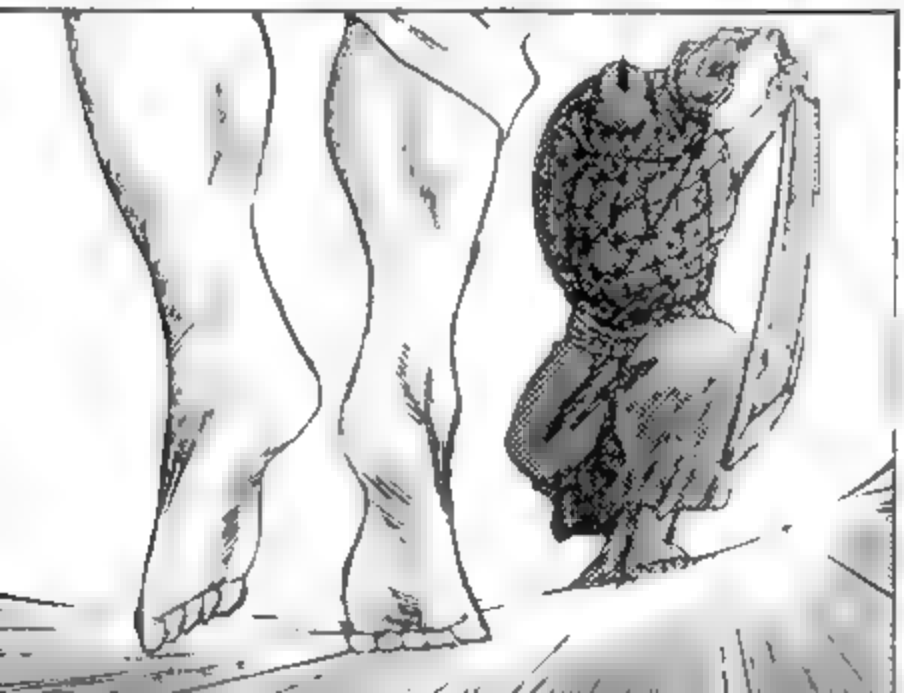
YOUR WEAPON DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE SUITABLE FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN STRENGTHENING ONE'S MUSCLES...

THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO FORGIVE MY RUDENESS FOR MISUSING IT.

ROOAAAR







I HAVE SEEN THROUGH YOUR TECHNIQUE.

AS ONE WARRIOR TO ANOTHER...

...HAVE THE GOOD GRACE TO GIVE UP NOW.

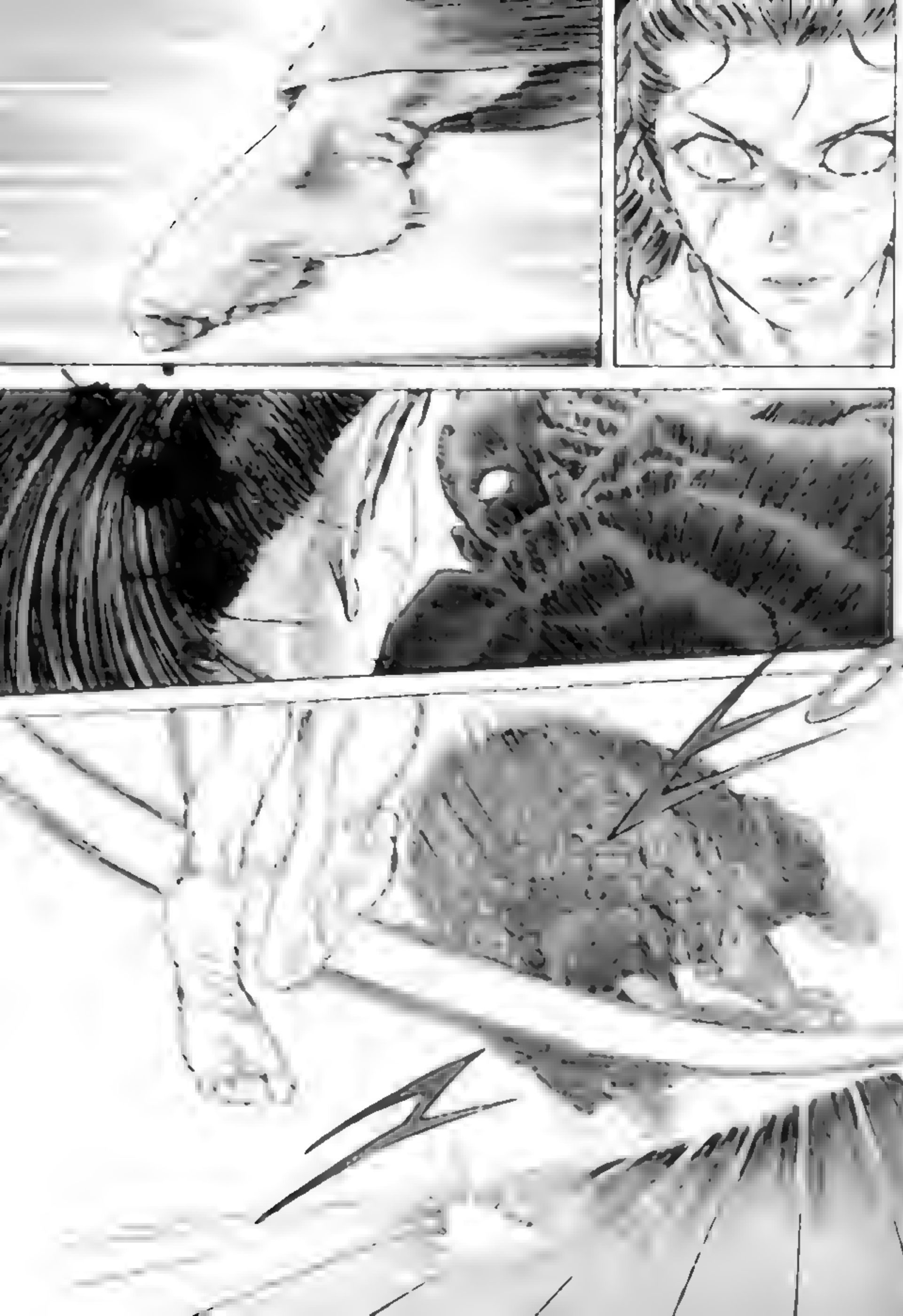
GO BLOCK THE EXIT!

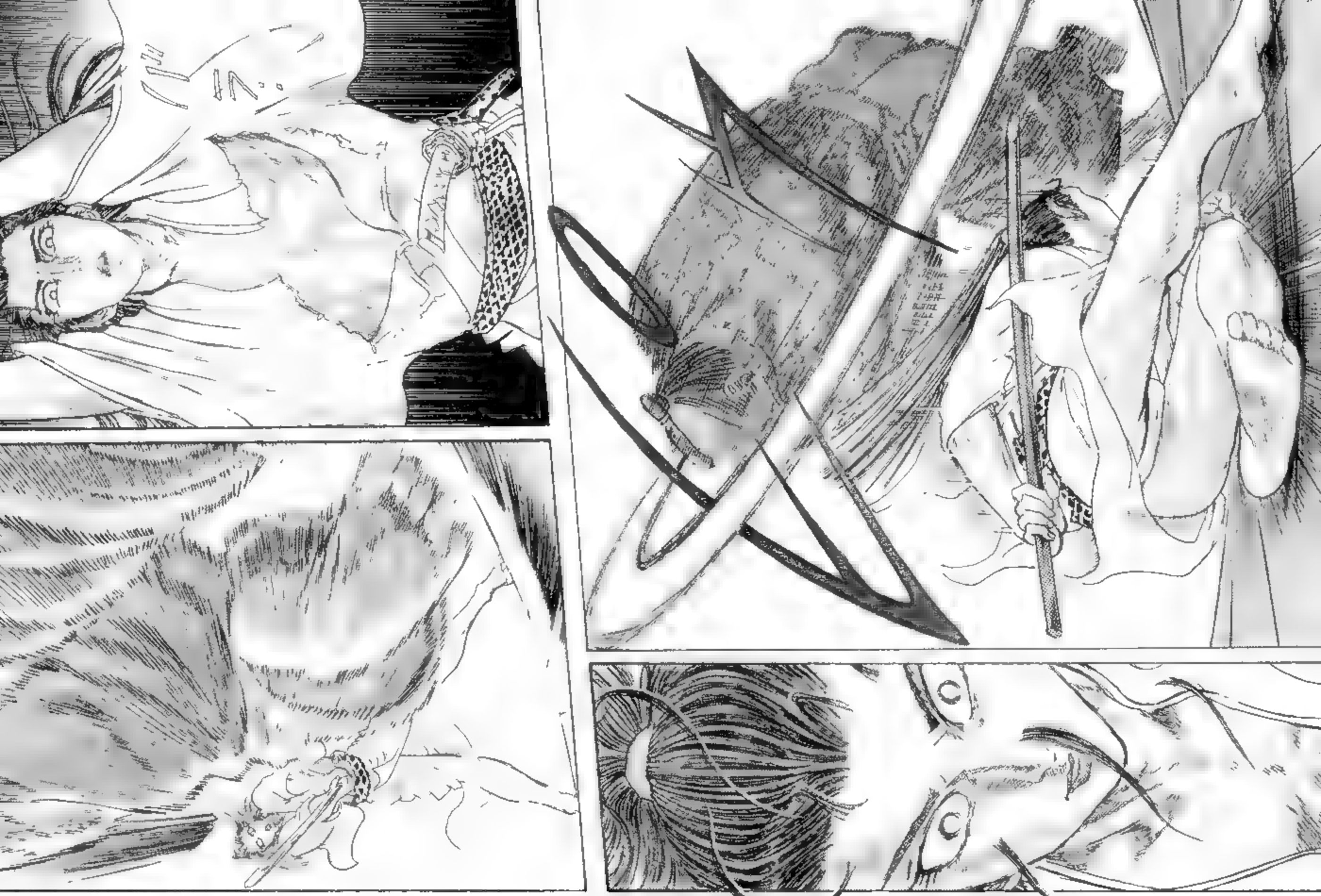
YAMAUCHI, OTSUBO...

MASTER USHIMATA HAS FINISHED HIS WARM-UP.

...of its power nonetheless!

...but I shall give you a taste...

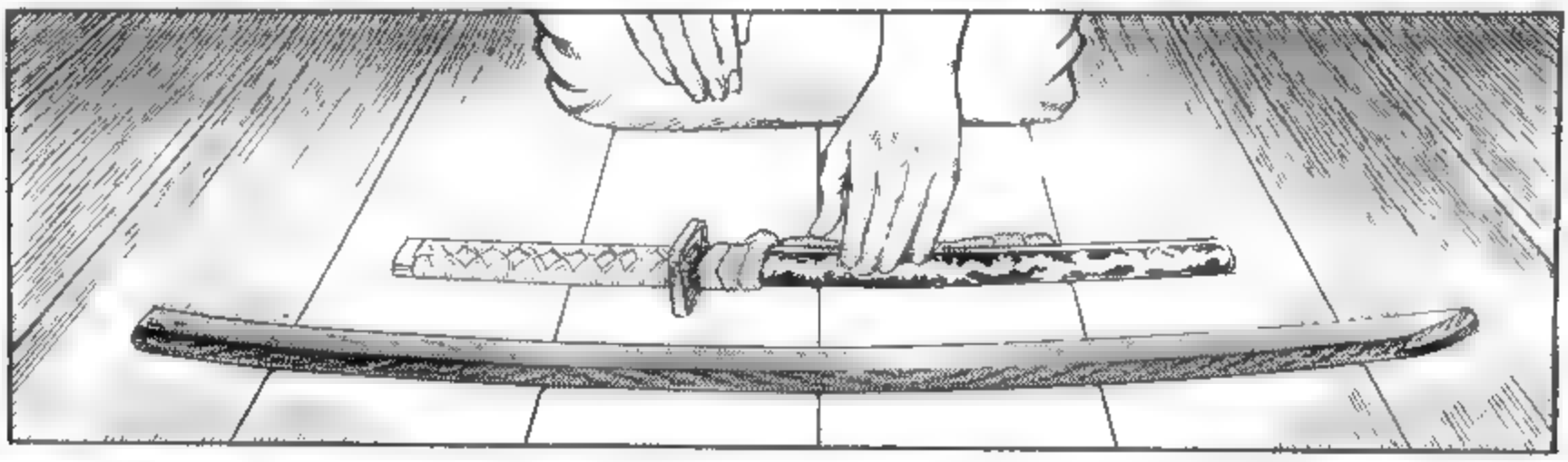




TO KILL IS EASY.

...BUT TO "BEAUTIFY" IS DIFFICULT

...has vanished!



I NOW RUE THE YEARS AND DAYS THAT I SPENT AS A VAGABOND.

AT LAST, I HAVE FOUND A WORTHY OPPONENT.

...I BEG YOU TO KINDLY ACCEPT ME AS YOUR PUP--

START ING FROM TODAY, FROM THIS VERY MOMENT EVEN...

THIS IS A DOJO. NOT A THEATER!

S-

My sword!

My sword!

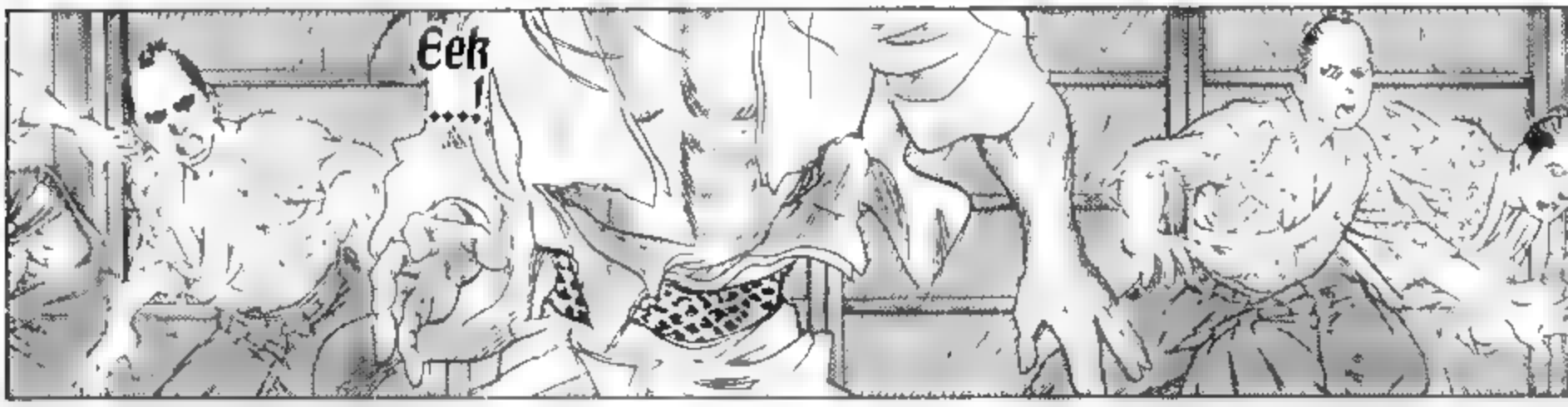
THAT'S MY SWORD!!

MOVE!

...NOT A FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

THE CONTEST BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF TWO DIFFERENT SCHOOLS IS AN ATTEMPT TO REFINE ONE'S SKILLS.

Why, you....!


Eek
....!

How did he manage to jump that high?

WHOAH!

THE BOUND THAT SEIGEN MADE...

...CLEARLY SURPASSED ANY LEVEL OF SKILL ONE COULD ATTAIN WITH SIMPLE TRAINING.

THE KNAVE MIGHT BE GIFTED IN SOME WAY...

NO... HE'S ONLY A COWARD!

BRING ME MY SPEAR!

SCENE FOUR: THE STICKY BEAN

IN THE KOGAN SCHOOL OF FENCING THERE EXISTED A [illegible] TECHNIQUE CALLED "SHOOTING STAR"...

...THAT HE DESCRIBED IT AS "A MARVELOUS SPECTACLE WITHOUT EQUAL IN PAST OR [illegible]."

...MUCH [illegible] MASTERPIECE CASTLE AND [illegible] OF OKP, SO MUCH...

INAMOTO KAGEMAN'S RIGHT HAND...

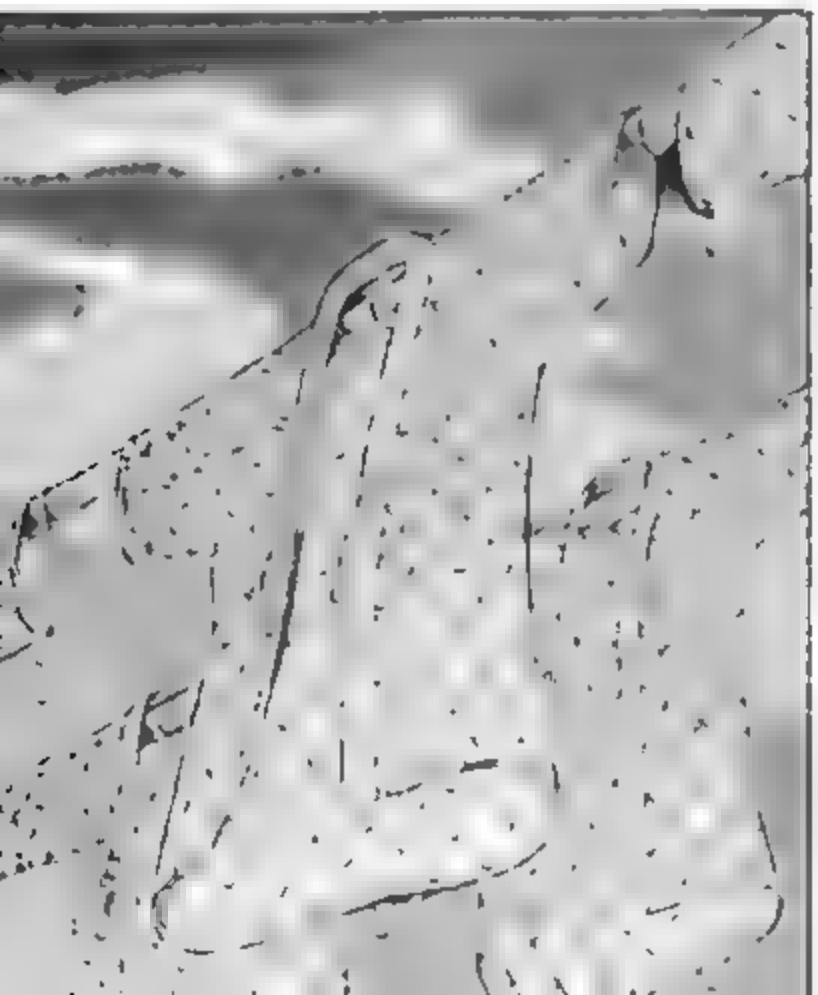
...WAS ENCOUNTERED WITH ONE MORE FINGER THAN THE NORM.

...TWO REMAINED ON THE MEN'S BODIES EVEN AFTER THEY WERE CUT OFF.

From Record of the Fencing Schools Founders

AMONG THE HEADS OF THE SIX CRIMINALS WHO SERVED INAMOTO AS DEMONSTRATION OBJECTS THAT DAY...

Kakegawa¹.
Tootoumi Province



SHALL I TAKE YOUR PLACE?

DOING THIS ALLOWS ME TO STRENGTH-EN MY FINGERS

NO, THANK YOU.

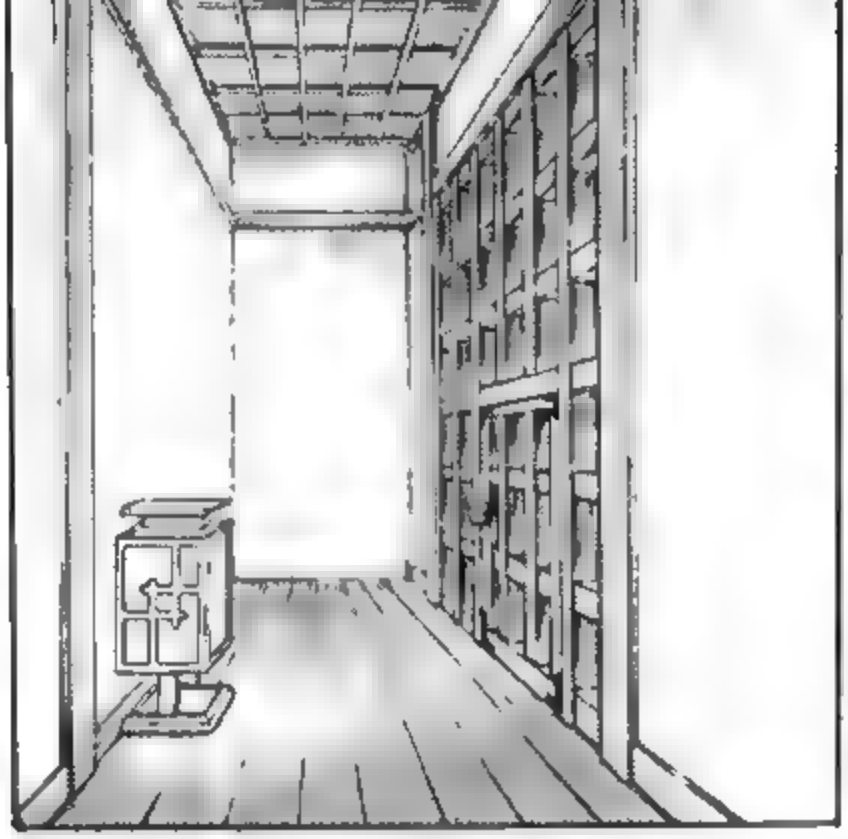
MIE WAS THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF IWAMOTO KOGAN, THE MARTIAL ARTS MASTER OF THE KAKEGAWA DOMAIN.

SHE WAS THE CHILD OF A SAMURAI WITH AN ANNUAL STIPEND OF 300 KOKU.

1 A samurai usually received his yearly income from his daimyo master in form of rice measured in **koku**. The samurai would generally trade part of this rice for coin or other goods and eat the rest. 300 koku (equivalent to 75 ryo or gold pieces) signifies that Iwamoto was a mid-ranking samurai.

AS FOR FUJIKI

ポチャ



...IRAKO SEIGEN WAS LOCKED UP IN A CELL[1].

AFTER BEING DEFEATED BY USHIMATA GONZAEMON...

1 **Zashiki-rô** *in Japanese. A specially built "room-cage" that was used in the Edo period to confine mentally disturbed or violent family members.*

The 300 koku show!

Just as you'd expect from the residence of Kakegawa's famous martial arts master!

YET, AS HE THOUGHT BACK OVER WHAT HE SAW WHILE BEING TAKEN THERE...

...SUCH AS THE MANSION'S SIZE OR THE NUMBER OF SERVANTS...

...HE COULDN'T HELP CHUCKLING TO HIMSELF.

The girl who stared at me from afar...

She must be Kogan's only daughter.

A SAMURAI OBTAINED HIS POSITION BY HEREDITARY SUCCESSION.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED ME WOULD SUCCEED KOGAN AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY AND INHERIT BOTH HIS RANK AND STIPEND.

HE WOULD ALSO GAIN A SOCIAL STATUS THAT ALLOWED HIM TO ATTEND THE CASTLE ON HORSEBACK ACCOMPANIED BY HIS OWN SPEAR SAMURAI AND PALANQUIN CARRIERS

A marriage doesn't sound too bad...

IRAKO SE SEĆA

OH!

USHIMATA DOMO

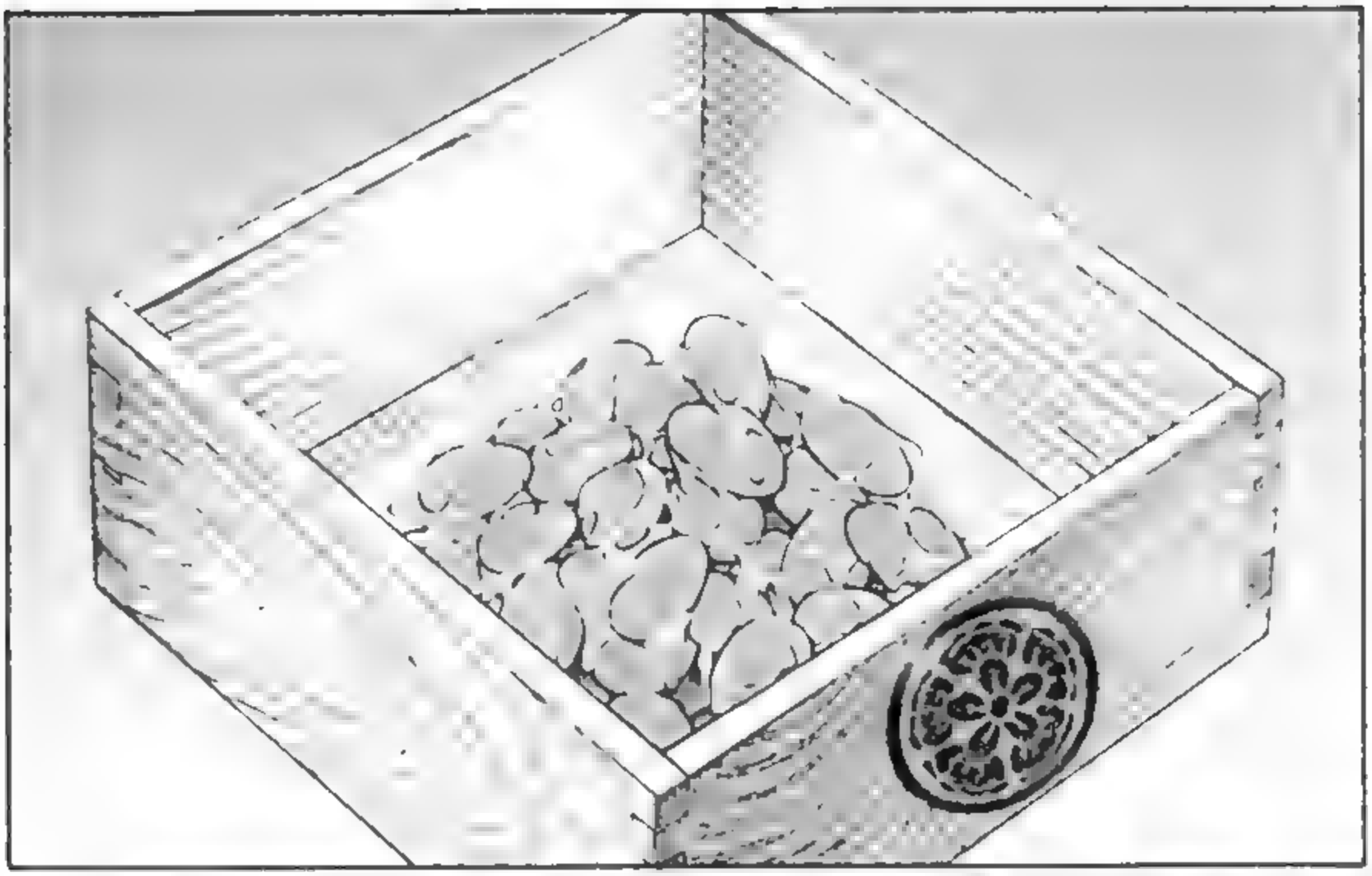
WHY, THANK YOU SO MUCH!

DOES THAT MEAN MY REQUEST TO BE ACCEPTED INTO THIS SCHOOL HAS BEEN GRANTED?

THE MASTER WILL NOW SEE YOU.

THAT IS FOR OUR MASTER TO DECIDE.

FOLLOW ME.



MIE-SAMA, WILL YOU PLEASE EXAMINE IT?

1 Sweet rice wine for seasoning.

2: A sweet sauce whose main ingredient is arrowroot (kudzu) starch seasoned with soy sauce and sugar.

3. Starch syrup.

THESE WERE COWPEAS STEWED IN SOY SAUCE, MIRIN AND SYRUP...

...TO WHICH ONE ADDED KUZUAN[2], A SPECIALTY OF KAKEGAWA...

...AND WHICH ONE DOUSED WITH MIZUAME[3], A PRECIOUS CONDIMENT IN THOSE DAYS, TO MAKE THEM GLUTINOUS.

YES, I THINK THEY'RE STICKY ENOUGH.

YOU MUSTN'T BOW YOUR HEAD.

JUST KEEP YOUR EYES FIXED AT HIM.

U-USHIMATA-DONO, WITH MY HANDS TIED LIKE THIS...

...I WON'T BE ABLE TO SHOW THE MASTER PROPER RESPECT!

AND NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, DON'T MAKE THE TINIEST MOVE!

HUH?

What kind of music is this...!

Wh-what are they doing!...

FELL INTO THIS STATE THE DAY HE REALIZED HE NO LONGER HAD CONTROL OVER WHAT MADE HIM EXCEPTIONAL: HIS FINGERS.

COULD TELL

TAINTY WHEN

KOGAN LOST HIS MENTAL BALANCE.

よろ…

よろ

U-USHIMATA-DONO_

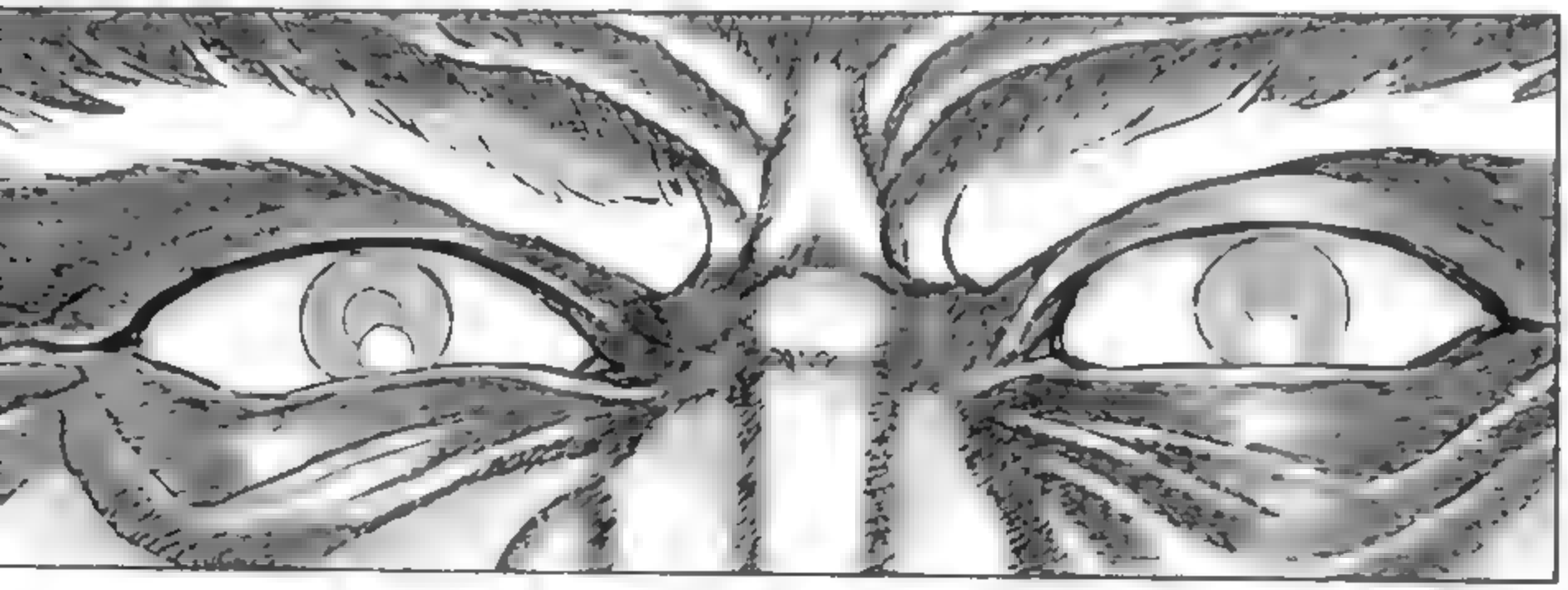
KOSSHI JUTSU PARALYZED SEIGEN COMPLETELY.

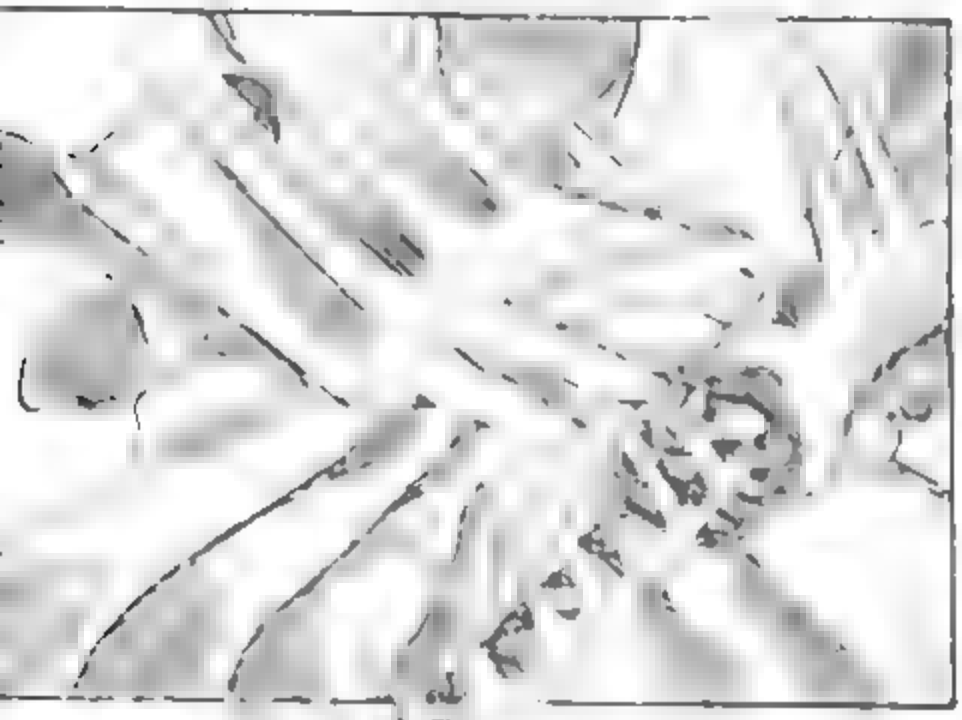
WHA ...?

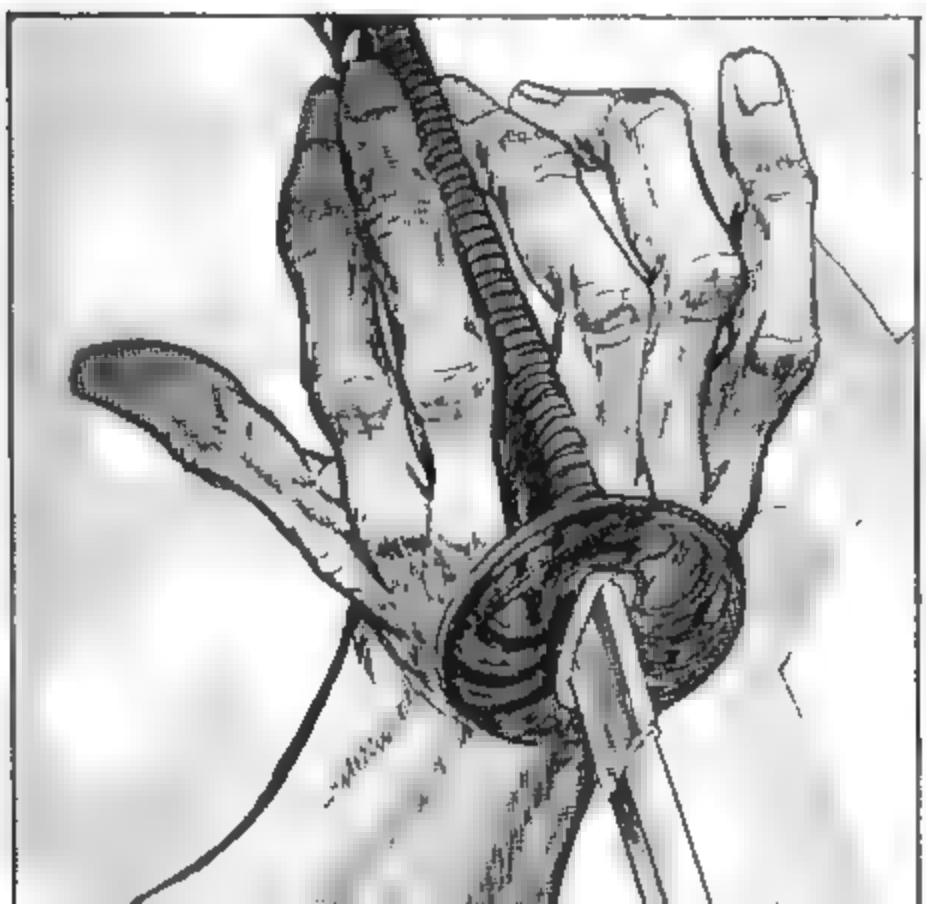
L

IT'S A MAN WHO CAME KNOCKING AT OUR SCHOOL'S DOOR.
NO, MASTER, IT'S NOT LADY IKU.

IKU







IT WAS THIS TEST THAT CONSTITUTED THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY OF THE KOGAN SCHOOL

BRAVO!

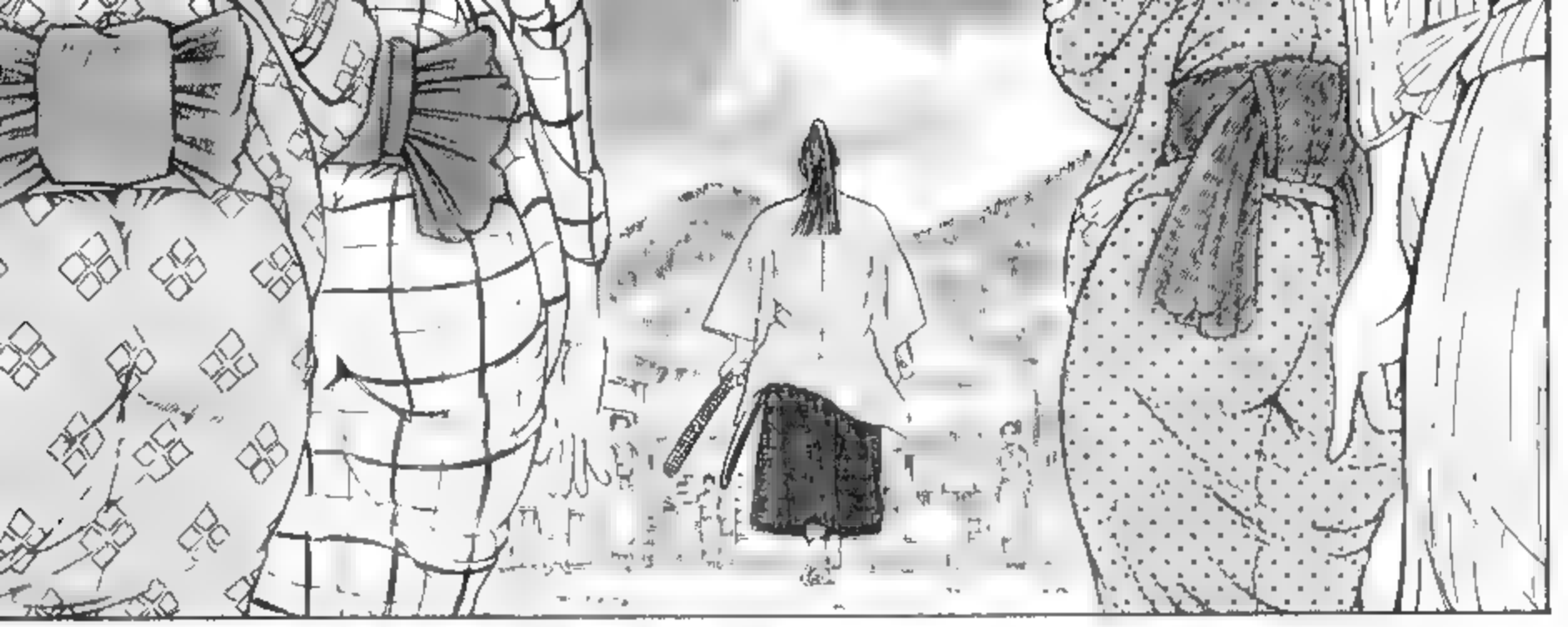
WELL DONE!

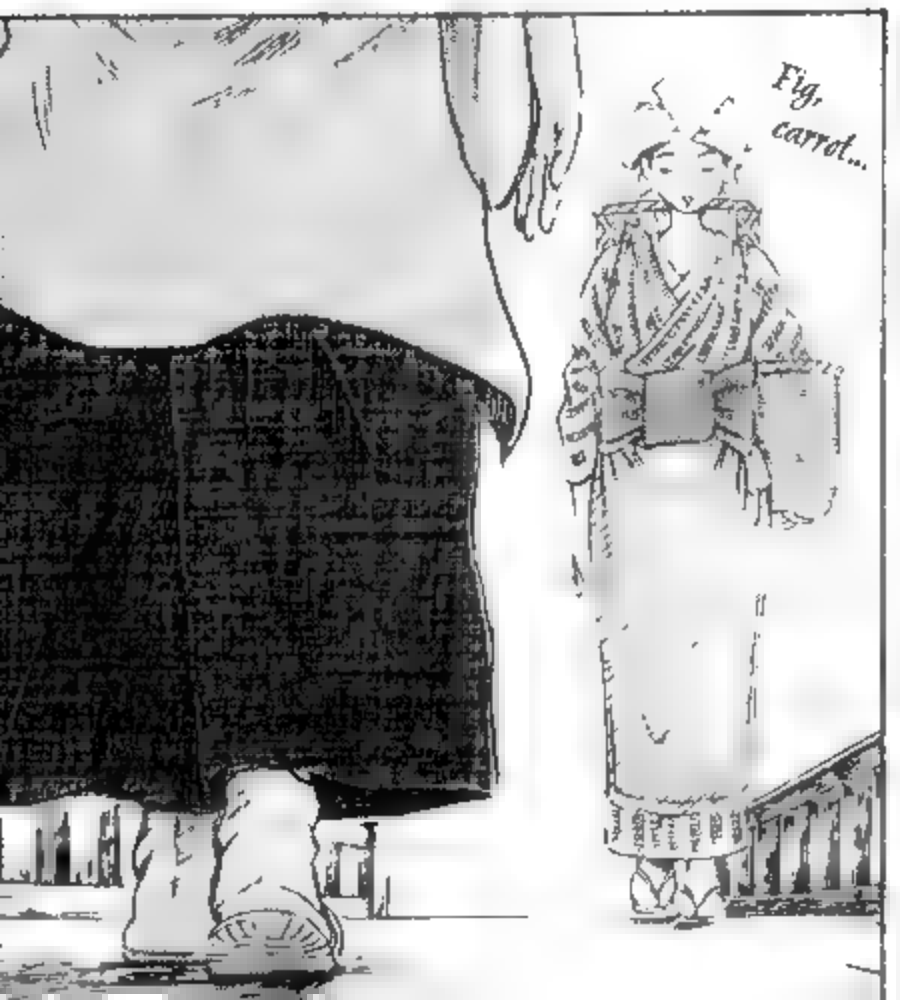
THE TEST OF THE STICKY BEAN.

SCENE FIVE:
A VISIT IN THE NIGHT

OH!
とみや屋

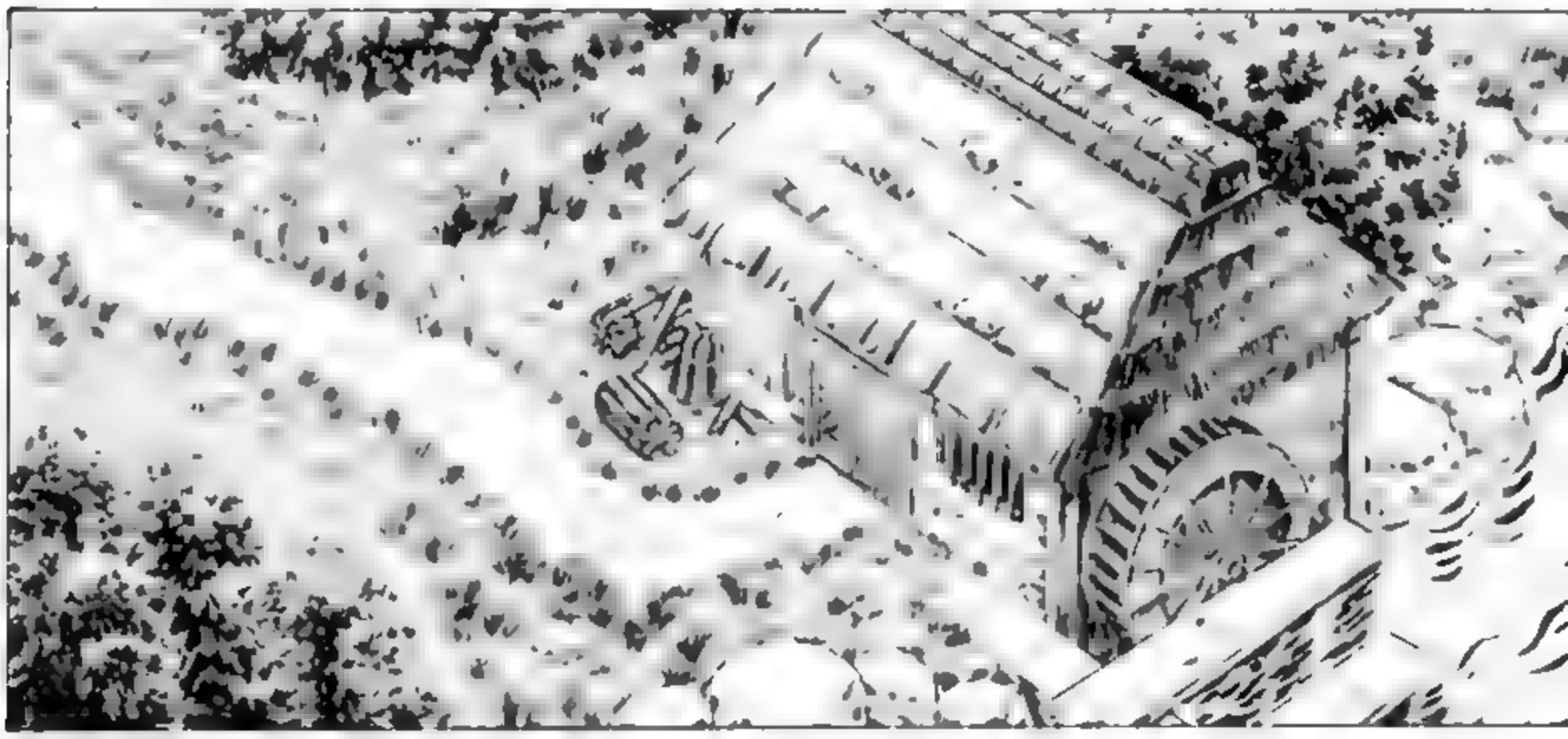
IRAKO SEIGEN




Fig, carrot...

Burdock and lotus root!

Flower pepper and shiitake!



DOJO OF MASTER

Wow!

Ooh...

...WHO WAS STRONGLY TIPPED TO BECOME THE KOGAN SCHOOL'S SUCCESSOR.

A LOT OF PUPILS STILL REMEMBERED WELL: UNTIL A YEAR AGO IT WAS FUJIKI GENNOSUKE...

"CUTTING THE HEAD-BAND" WITH A WOODEN SWORD...

...WAS A SPECIAL TECHNIQUE OF MASTER USHIMATA.

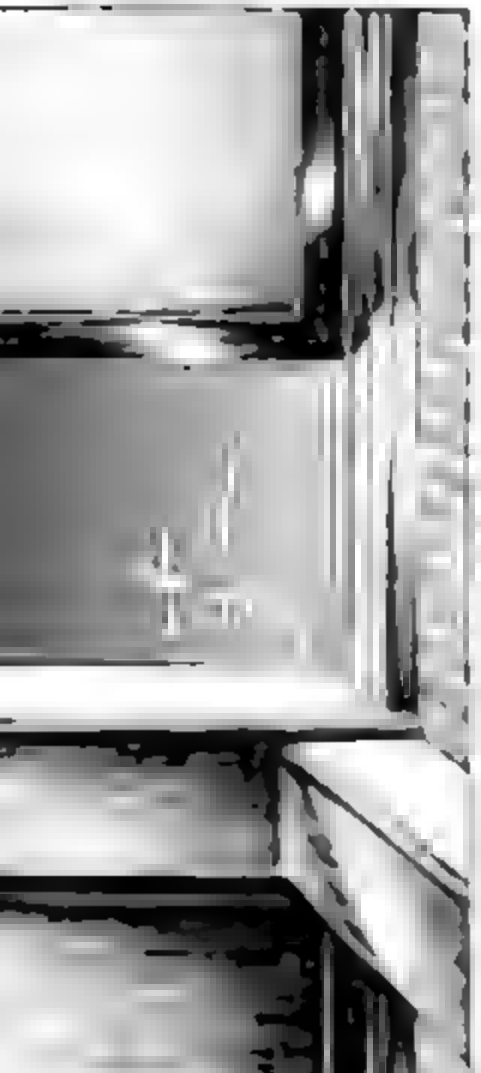
FUJIKI GENNOSUKE

...THAT INVOLVED SWINGING A WOODEN SWORD UP AND DOWN FOR HALF AN HOUR.

ping.

HERE WAS A

...WAS SUPPOSED TO PREVENT HIM FROM SHATTERING HIS OWN MOLARS BY GRITTING THEM TOO HARD DURING THE TRAINING.



FATHER!

I'M NOT LADY IKU!

I'M NOT--

IT'S ME, MIE!

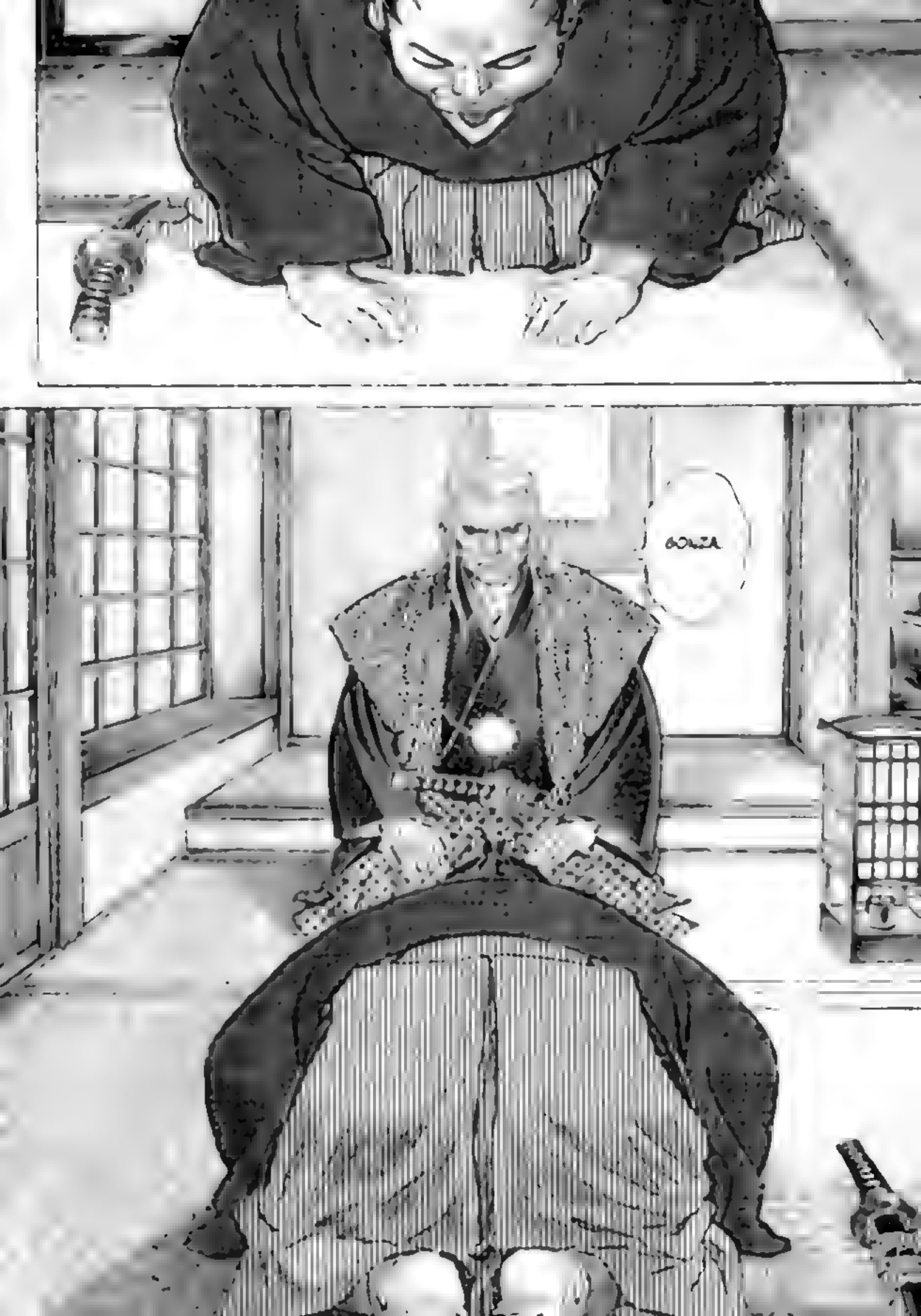
MASTER!

GO
SEND FOR
GOLEM

Mie!

You're finally ripe...

...AND IT WAS DURING THOSE TINY WINDOWS OF TIME THAT THE MASTER GAVE INSTRUCTIONS


ooze

IN YOUR OPINION, WHO BETWEEN FUJIKI AND IRAKO WOULD MAKE THE BETTER SUCCESSOR FOR THE KOGAN SCHOOL?

I THINK IT'S FUJIKI GENNOSUKE.

AND WHY IS THAT?

OUT OF RESPECT FOR MIE-DONO, IT WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT-

LIFT YOUR HEAD.

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?

ME WHAT?

IF ONLY HER MOTHER HAD BORNE ME A SON LIKE SHE SHOULD!

THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE TO

SPEAK!

I'M ASKING YOU, WHOSE SEMEN IS STRONGER, FUJIKI'S OR IRAKO'S?!

IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY?

THEY'RE EQUALLY STRONG -

THE SONS OF FUNAKI ICHIDENSAI

THEY'RE TWINS IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.

I WANT FUJIKI AND

His inner jaw was ripped off by Iwamoto Kogan during an official tournament.

Sunaki Ichidensai was a sword master whose virtuosity had been widely admired in the castle town of Kakegawa since the Keicho era[1].

CONTRARY TO COMMON PRACTICE, KOGAN WAS SHARPLY REPRIMANDED FOR HIS ACTION BY THE LORD OF KAKEGAWA CASTLE, ANDO NAOTSUGU, WHO CALLED IT "DISCOURTEOUS."

1 Lit: "helmet throwing."

...they practiced a unique technique called kabuto-nage.

In the Sunaki Dojo...

2: Lit. "helmet cutting."

THE NOVEL KABUTO-NAGE INVOLVES CUTTING A HELMET THAT IS THROWN TO YOU FROM THE SIDE

_THE INSTANT IT PASSES BEFORE YOUR EYES.

From the Funeki Family Records

UNLIKE THE COMMON KABUTO-WARI WHEREIN ONE CUTS A HELMET THAT HAS BEEN SPECIALLY PLACED FOR THE PURPOSE_

YES!

BIG BROTHER!

FUNAKI
KAZUMA

FUNAKI
HYOMA

BOTH KAZUMA AND HYOMA HAD ACHIEVED THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF KABUTO-NAGE...

...AND BECAME POWERFUL SWORDSMEN WHO MASTERED ALL THE SECRETS OF THE FUNAKI SCHOOL.

THE HUMILIATION I SUFFERED IN FRONT OF THE LORD...

I CAN'T FORGET IT, AS MUCH AS I TRY!

HOW COULD A MAN HARBOR SO MUCH HATRED FOR SOMEONE HE

WE'RE GOING TO...

...WIPE OUT THE SCHOOL OF FUNAKI ICHIDENSAI!

BRING ME THE HEADS OF FUNAKI'S SONS
THEIR HEADS SHALL

OUT OF IRAKO AND FUJIKI, THE ONE WHO ACCOMPLISHES THIS TASK WILL BE

...TO INSEMINATE MIE!

...THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES WOULD NEVER GRANT THEM

PROCEED, UNDER

FUNAKI SCHOOL

AGAINST THE

...THAT WOULD STAIN THE TEXTILE TOWN KAKEGAWA WITH BLOOD: "THE KAMA'ITACHI" OF

1 Lit. "sickle weasel." A folkloric monster the
sharp claws that rides on a gust of wind and c its people's skin on the legs.

shigurui

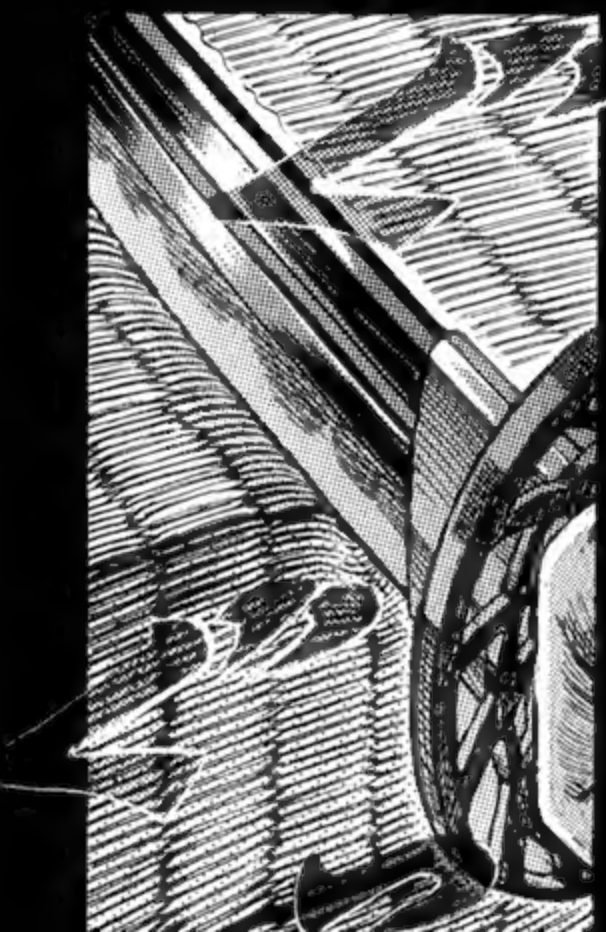
SHIGURUI
SCENE ZERO

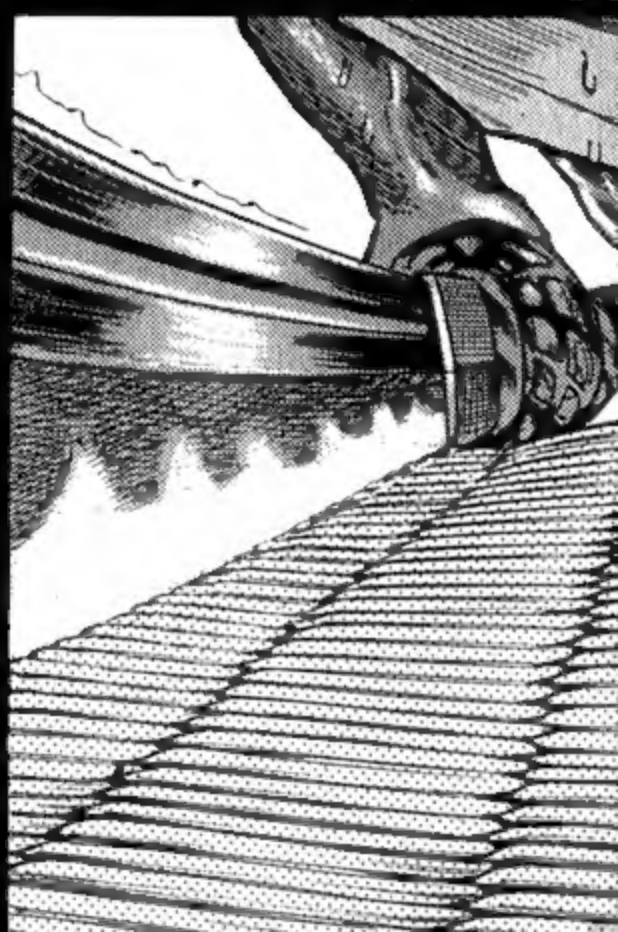
It all begins with the loss of something.

FUJIKI GENNOSUKE

...I won't hesitate to sacrifice both my blood and my soul.

When the time comes...





You won't
accomplish great
deeds with
common sense.
HRGH!

I hate him...

MIE

I hate him so much!

The Way of the Samurai
is in desperation.

Presented by YAMAGUCHI Takayuki×NANJOU Norio
"SHIGURUI" Vol..1/END